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BBC GoodFood MIDDLE EAST

PUBLISHER Dominic De Sousa
GROUP COO Nadeem Hood

ASSOCIATE PUBLISHERS
Carol Owen
Georgina Wilson-Powell

EDITORIAL
EDITOR: Sudeshna Ghosh
sudeshna.ghosh@cpimediagroup.com
ASSISTANT EDITOR: Nicola Monteath
nicola.monteath@cpimediagroup.com
SENIOR DESIGNER: Odilaine Salalac-Mejorada
PHOTOGRAPHER: Anas Cherur

ADVERTISING
ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER: Carol Owen
carol.owen@cpimediagroup.com
SALES DIRECTOR: Lauren Wing
lauren.wing@cpimediagroup.com /+971 55 6079507

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS
Marizel Salvador
marizel.salvador@cpimediagroup.com

ONLINE
Louie Alma

PRODUCTION
Devaprakash

DISTRIBUTION
Rochelle Almeida
rochelle.almeida@cpimediagroup.com

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DIRECTOR OF PUBLISHING: Nicholas Brett
HEAD OF PUBLISHING: Chris Kerwin
HEAD OF EDITORIAL: Jenny Potter
PUBLISHING COORDINATOR: Eva Abramik

Immediate Media Co.
CHAIRMAN: Stephen Alexander
DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Peter Phippen
CEO: Tom Bureau
HEAD OF LICENSING AND SYNDICATION: Joanna Marshall
INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS MANAGER: Aleksandra Nowacka

UK Good Food Team
EDITOR: Gillian Carter
CREATIVE DIRECTOR FOOD GROUP: Elizabeth Galbraith
FOOD DIRECTOR FOOD GROUP: Lulu Grimes
PUBLISHING DIRECTOR: Alfie Lewis

Editor's photograph shot at PINK PEPPER PHOTOGRAPHY | Makeup by CLARINS

Welcome!



It was during a recent chat with an Australian celebrity chef (read my interview with him in an upcoming issue) that the subject of 'location' came up – why a sense of location is becoming ever more important for a restaurant, wherever in the world it may be. It is this very emphasis that has made restaurants like Noma stand out, when chefs take what belongs to the region and reimagine it for the 21st century, in a fine dining avatar.

And this is exactly what I often find lacking in the UAE dining scene, sadly. In spite of being one of the most vibrant and dynamic places in the world when it comes to new restaurants, I have been subject to far more forgettable meals than I have ones that I would happily recommend to friends. It's all there – stunning settings, an immense amount of talent in the kitchens… but that moment of bliss when your tastebuds do a little dance of joy, seem to elude me here. And it's not that hard to find – I've experienced it many a time, whether it was sitting in a little bistro in Europe, at a street stall in Asia, or at the beachfront in Africa. Fuss-free, no-frills good food.

And I think it all comes down to the freshness and quality of the ingredients. No amount of culinary wizardry can mask it when the star cast of a dish is under-performing. And when the ingredient is good, even the best chefs in the world know to do as little with it as possible, and still present superlative food. I know, I know – it is extremely hard to find the standard of fresh produce that five star restaurants need locally, especially as we are in the middle of the desert! But, I am pleased to see that change is coming, slowly but surely. More restaurants are looking to source local, and are increasingly managing to do so.

Equally important for a sense of location is the availability of local cuisine, and this month's Dubai World Hospitality Championships (November 16-18, Dubai World Trade Centre) is a significant step forward in bringing Emirati cuisine into the spotlight. I'm looking forward to it.

I am also looking forward to the alfresco season finally arriving, and if you are too, look no further than our comprehensive array of features in this issue – whether it's creative twists on traditional BBQ favourites or stylish picnic fare (yes, it's possible!). Turn to pages 41 (*New flames*), 46 (*James Martin's BBQ hits*) and 50 (*Pack a posh picnic*) to find the recipes you will be making this month and beyond, in the gorgeous Middle Eastern sunshine.

And to learn exactly how delicious fresh food, simply prepared can be – turn to p90 to go on an epicurean journey to spice island Zanzibar (the term fresh catch took on a whole new meaning for me, when I ran into fishermen bringing in their just-caught bounty for the chefs at the Mnemba private island resort) in *Island idyll*.

Do you agree with me, that freshness is paramount when it comes to good food? Let me know what you think on feedback@bbcgoodfoodme.com, I'd love to hear from you.

Until next month, keep it fresh!

Sudeshna

P.S. Give the restaurants that **are** getting it right, the recognition they deserve!



BBC GoodFood MIDDLE EAST

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BBC GoodFood MIDDLE EAST

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Our recipe descriptions

V Suitable for vegetarians
❄ You can freeze it
Not suitable for freezing
Easy Simple recipes even beginners can make
A little effort These require a bit more skill and confidence – such as making pastry
More of a challenge Recipes aimed at experienced cooks
Low fat 12g or less per portion
Low cal 500 calories or less per main.
Superhealthy Low in saturated fat, 5g or less per portion; low in salt, 1.5g or less; and at least one of the following: provides one-third or more of your daily requirement of fibre, iron, calcium, folic acid and/or vitamin C, or counts at least one portion of your recommended 5-a-day fruit and veg.
Good for you Low in saturated fat, low in salt.
Heart healthy Low in saturated fat, with 5g or less, and low in salt, with 1.5g or less, and high in omega-3 fatty acids
1 of 5-a-day The number of portions of fruit and/or veg contained in a serving
Vit C **Iron** **Omega-3** **Calcium** **Folate** **Fibre** Indicating recipes that are good sources of useful nutrients

Some recipes contain pork & alcohol. These are clearly marked and are for non-Muslims only. Look for these symbols:
P Contains pork
Contains alcohol

Store Directory

Contact numbers for outlets featured in this issue

Ace Hardware: 04-3411906
2XL Furniture: 04-2888071
Crate and Barrel: 04-3990125
Harvest Home: 04-3420225
Homes R Us: 04-4469820
Indigo Living: 04-3466934
Lakeland: 04-3236081
Tavola: 04-3402933
Villeroy and Boch: 04-3399676
TWG Tea Salon and Boutique: 04-3253857

Note: Prices in Qatari Riyals are usually the same as UAE Dirhams.

Your say

We love to hear from you!

USEFUL ADVICE



I really enjoyed the article on oil (*Oil's well*, October 2013). What interested me the most was the fact that olive oil and canola oil, which I've always used in cooking, have more fat than coconut oil! I grew up in an Indian household, where my mum used coconut oil for cooking everything. Until now I've been using olive oil and canola oil, because every chef that appears on TV channels cook mostly with these oils. Now that I have read this feature, I am fully informed and aware. As for the current olive oil in my cupboard, I'll use it only for salads or with bread. I will also update my family and friends about this important healthy living tip.

Ruth Misquitta

FAMILY-FRIENDLY READ

Hats off to the *BBC Good Food Middle East* team for churning out another interesting issue! I truly enjoyed reading the September issue that included child friendly step-by-step recipes, tips on encouraging children to get involved in making their own school lunches and more importantly, the healthy lunchbox ideas. The Chicken, carrot and avocado rolls (*Healthy lunchbox ideas*, September 2013) that I tried out were a hit with my fussy kids and they savoured them. Thanks *BBC Good Food ME,* once again, for inspiring and motivating us mums to try out quick, healthy, nutritious and wholesome meals that give our children the natural energy boost they desperately need to make it through the day.

Lavita Patrao

TALK TO US!

Email us on feedback@bbcgoodfoodme.com with your thoughts, views and comments.

You can also connect with us on social media! Find us on:

@bbcgoodfoodmiddleeast **@bbcgoodfoodme**

Or, you could write to us at:
The Editor
BBC Good Food Middle East.
Dubai Media City, Building 4, Office G08
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Win! The writer of the Star Letter wins a **Dhs1,000 shopping voucher from Crate and Barrel**. The 50-year old American brand is known for its exquisite selection of homeware products, essential kitchen items, outdoor and indoor furniture and everything else you can ever want for your home. The collections are suitable for modern and traditional homes alike and are updated every season. There's really no better destination when it comes to cosy, chic and stylish furniture and accessories for the home. Crate and Barrel stores are located in Mall of the Emirates and Mirdiff City Centre, Dubai.



Star Letter

TRYING NEW TREATS



While going through the October issue, I came across the Sticky date cakes recipe (*Arabian, With a Twist*) and got so tempted that I went to the supermarket to buy all the ingredients I needed to bake it for myself. It is a tasty way to have dates, and great for those who do not like to consume green leafy vegetables to get minerals – like my husband! I gave him a piece for breakfast, with milk, and as a tea cake. I am very thankful to *BBC Good Food ME* for publishing this recipe which is so simple and easy to bake. I will be baking another batch for my friends and will top it with delicious caramel sauce. I am sure they will be very impressed and love it!

Ishmeen Sethi

FASHION MEETS FOOD



Thank you for your interesting Gourmet Lifestyle feature (*Couture Cuisine*, September 2013). As a food and fashion lover, I find the concept of couture cuisine intriguing. Food and fashion have lot of similarities – for instance, fashion changes season after season and food changes with the seasons too. Couture cuisine has a lot to do with style and taste. People who enjoy taking care of the way they dress, usually also like to eat well. Eating and dressing both involve a discernment and to create good food or beautiful fashion, is to engage the mind and body in a unified artistic or creative act. It is always a pleasure to dine in restaurants like Cavalli Club and Armani Café, as the food is classic, elegant and beautifully presented, just like the fashion in Italy. I look forward to watching the couture cuisine scene as it continues to grow and expand in the UAE.

Maura Hales

We asked you…

Facebook poll

Your favourite picnic foods are?

50% Cold cuts and cheese platter

33% Sandwiches

17% Quiche



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Feast on a variety of authentic dim sum, hand pulled noodles and rice with your choice of soup and dessert. Priced at Dhs 115 per person and available daily from 12:30 to 15:00.

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Foodie file

What's hot and happening in the culinary world, here and around the globe.


The Pizza Guys


Abd El Wahab-The Fisherman

DINE IN THE CITY

✳ Michelin-starred celebrity chef Gary Rhodes has opened his first outpost in the capital, Rhodes 44 at The St. Regis Abu Dhabi. The signature restaurant is a contemporary dining venue which offers classic British and European dishes, as well as a few with an Arabic touch such as Asian-inspired seared sumac and pistachio king prawns. Call 02-6944444.

✳ We're delighted to hear about the second outlet of Jamie's Italian which has finally opened at Jumeirah Beach Hotel. The menu includes old favourites as well as new delicacies like baked sustainable cod and lamb chop lollipops. Call 04-3808890.

✳ The Pizza Guys, located in Business Bay, combine the soul of Naples with the vibe of a New York style pizzeria, where pizzas, pasta and sandwiches are made fresh from simple, but good quality ingredients. Try their chicken and potato pizza and mouthwatering homemade cookies filled with Lindt dark chocolate. Call 8008434897.

✳ Abd El Wahab-The Fisherman is the latest seafood addition from this Lebanese chain of restaurants, opened at Pier 7, Dubai Marina Mall. Alongside traditional mezze, the highlights on the menu include dried fish with a lemon and soy sauce. The restaurant also offers shisha on the terrace. Call 04-4325782.

Drink up in style

We look forward to Evian's annual collaborations with leading designers every year, and this year, we've fallen in love with the Elie Saab limited edition bottle. Those familiar with Saab's lace gowns will recognise his signature lace pattern on the surface of the elegant bottles. Dhs14, at select supermarkets and restaurants.



"Life is a combination of magic and pasta."
- Italian film director Frederico Fellini.



This just in:

Winter baking is sorted with this Bread Cloche from Emile Henry, in which you can bake crusty bread, thanks to the ceramic material and domes in the cloche which work the same way as a brick-oven. Dhs490 at Tavola.

Putting Emirati cuisine on the map

The first Dubai World Hospitality Championship is the talk of the town at the moment! The event, which will take place from November 16-18 at the Dubai World Trade Centre, will comprise of three chef competitions including The International, The Emirati and The Hospitality Sector. Expect to see famed culinary masters, as well as 700 chefs from all over the world, go head to head to win accolades. The event, supported by the World Association of Chefs Societies and The Emirates Culinary Guild, aims to highlight Emirati cuisine by serving a selection of Emirati foods at the culinary museum and model heritage village in the event halls, where you can also check out traditional Emirati handicrafts. Free entry for all, call 04-3369685 for more information.

Compiled by NICOLA MONTEATH | Photograps SUPPLIED, PHOTOS.COM.

What's trending

#pumpkin
It's that time of year again when pumpkins are used in everything from cheesecakes to lattes. @RichysDubai recently tweeted their soup of the day – pumpkin soup – while many tweeted their pumpkin sculptures for Halloween, as well as face mask recipes (as pumpkin is a great source of Vitamin A and D for the skin). We even found out that one medium-sized pumpkin-spiced latte from McDonald's has 48 grams of sugar in it!

Home

ALL ITALIA!



The Italian Cuisine World Summit, the most prestigious Italian food event in the world, is coming to Italian restaurants across Dubai from November 7-10. It will include cooking classes, acrobatic pizza performances by a world champion, and a one-day festival at Bussola highlighting the best of Italian foods. With 25 Italian guest master chefs in attendance, and competitions such as best Italian pizza in the UAE, there will be plenty of excitement for all. Visit www.dubaisummit.itchefs-gvci.com for event details and to find out more on participating restaurants.

Reducing waste

Tesco, the UK supermarket giant, aims to reduce food wastage by cutting back on food promotion schemes on salad bags (68 per cent of which are usually thrown out). Tesco will also reduce the amount of bread on display at their in-store bakeries, to prevent wastage, and will be sharing tips with customers on how to use leftover bread. Wonder when local supermarkets will follow suit?

6.2%
The expected increase of total food consumption in the UAE by 2017, according to the UAE Food and Drink Report by Business Monitor



A HUNK WHO COOKS?

That's right! Paul Frangie, model, chef consultant and founder of a six-part online cooking series called This Dude Knows Food (thisdudeknows-food.com) knows exactly how to please the ladies with his culinary skills. He has just launched the first season of his fortnightly cooking demo series which offers quick, tasty and healthy dishes such as gluten-free pancakes, fajita rolls and Thai prawn curry. Look out for a Christmas frittata coming out soon!

SAVE THE DATE

The Life and Style Show UAE, the largest ever lifestyle show in the Middle East is all set to offer visitors a one-of-a-kind weekend filled with fun and bargains. The show takes place from December 5-7 at the Abu Dhabi National Exhibitions Centre and will include the KidZania zone for children, cooking demonstrations from celebrity chefs including Gary Rhodes and Chef Khulood Atiq, and fashion shows. Tickets cost Dhs25 in advance and Dhs50 at the door, visit www.thelifeandstyleshowuae.com.



A new take on pudding!

Love rice pudding? You'll love Rice Creamery, a new dessert concept dedicated solely to rice pudding, located at the all-new Citywalk development on Al Wasl Road. On offer are 25 innovative and international flavours including orange blossom, kunafa and red velvet, all made without artificial chemicals or preservatives, and with fresh natural ingredients. Call 04-3444553.

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Aisle file

Gorgeous gourmet buys, kitchen gear, home décor and more.



Add Asian flair to teatime with this gorgeous teal Kimono teapot with floral patterns. Dhs209 at **INDIGO LIVING**.



Give bagels an accurate, even cut with this Acacia Bagel Miter and fill it with cream cheese, sliced vegetables and your favourite cuts of meat or salmon, for an indulgent New York-style breakfast. Dhs59 at **CRATE AND BARREL**.



Keep an opened bottle of your favourite wine fresh for longer with this adorable red Anna bottle stopper from **ALESSI**. Dhs98 at **TAVOLA**.



Ever sipped on a tea with an aroma so beautiful you wish you could fill your home with it? Now you can, with TWG Tea's selection of scented candles which feature scents from the brand's exclusive tea blends. Banish those kitchen aromas with delicious fragrances such as white earl grey tea, bain de rose tea, oud night tea and miraculous mandarin tea. Dhs301 each at **TWG TEA SALON AND BOUTIQUE**, Dubai Mall.



Treat yourself to organic fair-trade Belgian chocolate truffles, available flaked and in hazelnut, coconut and almond flavours. We dare you to eat just one of these decadent delights! Dhs30 from **AVEEM FOODS**, available at specialty stores.

The next time you're looking for durable and pretty tableware, choose the Zenix range from **LUMINARC**, which is up to three times more resistant to shocks than glass, has a smooth and non-porous reinforced surface, and retains its new appearance even after being washed. From Dhs357 for a 19-piece set.





Ditch the big cooler boxes for this retro, portable family-sized insulated bag which comes with a wipe-clean lining and keeps beverages cool at all times – perfect for picnics and barbecues at the park or beach. Dhs155 at **LAKELAND**.



It's the season to dine alfresco, so invest in these small white porcelain serving plates from the Modern Grace collection at **VILLEROY AND BOCH** to glam up your next garden party or simply to give weeknight outdoor suppers an elegant twist. Prices start from Dhs80.

These easy-on-the-eye, vintage-style Cornflake boxes are not only airtight, to keep cereal from going stale quickly, but will also add a retro touch to your kitchen counter. Dhs56 at **2XL**.



Compiled by NICOLA MONTEATH | Photographs SUPPLIED



Here to help

Our expert chef Andy Campbell offers practical advice to tackle all your cooking dilemmas.



Q How do I make sweet potato fries crunchy and crisp?

A. I bake them instead of frying, as it's a healthier option. Preheat an oven to 230C and wash and dry the sweet potatoes. Slice into 1 or 1.5 cm chips and toss in a bowl with a little olive oil, salt and black pepper. Place on a baking tray, making sure there is space between each chip, or they will not cook properly. Bake for 15 minutes, then turn the chips over and cook for a further 10 minutes. Remove from the oven, set aside to cool a little and serve.

Q I made muesli with steel cut oats and it didn't turn out the way I like it. Please help?

A. I prefer to cook with rolled oats as pin head oats are too small and are good for porridge instead. Add your favourite nuts, berries, seeds and grains. I like adding sunflower and pumpkin seeds, almonds, hazelnuts, branberries and blueberries to the oats. If you toast this in sunflower oil and honey, your muesli becomes granola.

Q I've heard you have to consume fresh juice within an hour of making it. Is this true and why?

A. Yes it is. Fresh juice contains Ascorbic acid and Vitamin C, which, when exposed to air, will oxidise and make the juice deteriorate – either go cloudy or start to fizz. Orange juice keeps in the fridge for up to two days but make sure to pack it in an airtight container with as little air in it as possible, when refrigerating.

Q How do I prevent bread from turning hard on the inside the next day?

A. The storage of bread is really important – never keep it in the fridge as the fat used in the bread will solidify. I seal the bread in a zip lock plastic bag with the air removed to give it the longest shelf life.



Q I've tried making syrup for pancakes and it always burns. Could you please give me a fail-proof syrup recipe?

A. I always revert back to classic techniques when I'm not sure of recipes, and crêpe suzette come to mind on this one. On medium heat in a thick bottomed pan, add 3 tbsp of caster sugar and cook gently to an amber colour. Remove the pan from the heat and add 250ml of fresh orange juice and 1 tsp lemon juice. Put back on low heat and stir till a syrup is formed. Slowly whisk in 50g of unsalted butter a little at a time, remove from heat and serve hot with or over pancakes and waffles.

Andy's ingredient of the month



Locally grown red radish is high in Vitamin C, phosphorous and zinc, and has a natural zing and crunch, making it perfect for salads. This little vegetable is from the same family as broccoli and cabbage and also has medicinal properties – it soothes sore throats, aids digestion and prevents viral infections.

Menu planner

Whip up a delicious meal with recipes from this issue

Friday family lunch get-together



Drink
A delicious daytime drink – Elderflower cocktail, p52



Starter
Simple Mediterranean flavours – Halloumi kababs, p46



Main
This Greek lamb with potatoes is a guaranteed hit, p36



Dessert
Comfort food at its heartiest – Apple Crumble, p66

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ROCOCO

STEP INTO THE WORLD OF ITALIAN STARS

Step through the big wooden doors of Rococo into an Italy that still needs to be discovered. With Michelin Starred guest Chef Sergio Vineis from Il Patio Vineis, Biella and our very own team, the center of the Earth has moved to the refreshingly modern Rococo. Dining experience that will delight with unexpected dishes awaits from 7th to 9th November 2013.

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SOFITEL LUXURY HOTELS

Tried & tasted

Each month, we review two of the city's top tables.

Contemporary European





Where: Celebrities at The Palace, One & Only Royal Mirage

What's it like: Like everything else at this hotel, the restaurant oozes understated luxe – plush carpeting, silk curtains, crystal chandeliers and a subtle beige colour scheme all of which come together to create an ambience that is on the sophisticated side of glam. The recently revamped restaurant now features a French-influenced European menu that offers just enough variety without being confusingly large.

For starters, I opted for the courgette flower tempura with langoustine and mozzarella – which, while artfully presented, seemed to lack in cohesion a little bit. Each element of the dish was beautiful, but somehow, they didn't come together as well as I'd have expected, but I enjoyed it nonetheless. My partner's wild mushroom risotto with truffle oil on the other hand (also available as a main course) definitely won Round One, with the slippery mushrooms and the divine truffle flavour literally melting in the mouth. The main course was a slightly more closely contested battle, where my citrus flavoured roasted turbot (one of my favourite fishes) with port wine sauce, carrot and baby onion offered up a delicate symphony of flavours. My partner's tender farm chicken breast with celeriac purée and barbajuans (a fried pasty stuffed with spinach, typical of the French Riviera) was prepared without the foie gras on the menu, as per his request, and was no less delicious for it, stuffed as it was with herbs. The restaurant is happy to tailor dishes according to guests' tastes, something that portly French restaurant manager Damien made clear to us at the outset – this sort of friendly helpfulness was something I really appreciated in the service style.

Round Three went to my choice of the strawberry and pistachio vacherin (a traditional meringue dessert) with its delightful interplay of textures, while my partner's red berries with vanilla milk shake (more like vanilla cream drizzled over the fruit) with dark chocolate sauce made for a playful end to his meal.

Best for: Date night

If you want to go: Around Dhs550 for three-course meal for two, without drinks. Call 04-3999999.

- Sudeshna Ghosh



Where: Studio Du Chef, Sofitel Dubai The Palm Resort and Spa

What's it like: You are greeted at the entrance of this brand new hotel by a vibrant living wall draped with greenery that you just can't resist touching! The restaurant, on the other hand– is nowhere as tropical, with its modern décor made up of marble flooring and simple dark brown leather cushioned chairs. The restaurant is divided into a chef's table area, a bar to the left hand side, and the dining area to the right. We decided it was time to eat alfresco and headed for the expansive terrace.

The minute we sat down, we were offered an innovative amuse bouche of salmon filled with chive cream on vegetable jelly. The menu is pretty concise, but if you can't make up your mind, head chef Oliver Chaleil will pop by the table to recommend his favourites. I began with a foie gras with port wine jelly, roasted figs, date chutney and brioche, and the portion was large enough for two. The warm brioche melted the foie gras as soon as the two met, and the sweetness of the bread was enhanced by the chutney and figs. My partner had the soft langoustine ravioli which with purple artichoke purée, soya and truffle broth and artichoke crisps, which had a delicate flavour. A meaty pan-seared sea bass with sweet and sour fennel, clams, and zucchini flower with eggplant caviar was my main course, in which all the different elements complemented each other nicely, with the shellfish stock giving the fish a subtly tangy kick. My partner chose the chicken ballotine, crayfish, truffle potato blinis, green asparagus, gravy and verjus. From all the delectable parts of the dish, the potato blinis with the flavour of truffles stood out – a must-try! We decided to share the chocolate variation for desserts which included a chocolate fondant cake, chocolate mousse and a chocolate roll filled with peppermint cream – definitely one for chocoholics! Cheese lovers will also love the variety of French cheeses from the charming cheese trolley which comes rolling by the table, to lure you in at the finish.

If you want to go: Around Dhs600 for three-course meal for two, without drinks. Call 04-4556677.

- Nicola Monteath

Best for: A lively night out with friends





Photographs SUPPLIED and by REVIEWERS



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Flavours of the month

Our pick of the best restaurant offers, promotions and deals this month.


Caramel Restaurant

A supper to be grateful for

Celebrate Thanksgiving at Caramel Restaurant and Lounge this month, with a four-course set menu of American classics such as butternut squash soup, pumpkin risotto or sweet potato gnocchi for starters and a classic roast turkey with trimmings of sausage stuffing, cranberry compote and gravy, ending with a sumptuous pumpkin cheesecake.
Dhs179 on November 28 only, call 04-4256677.

Tasty terrace

Dine alfresco at the all-new La Terrase, an extension of the Reflets par Pierre Gagnaire restaurant at InterContinental Dubai Festival City. The venue offers splendid views of the Dubai Creek, making it ideal for an apéritif or digestif to complement a meal in the restaurant, or simply to enjoy gourmet cuisine in a casual setting.
Dhs350 for four bites and a glass of bubbly, call 04-7011111.

Taste of Italy

Pax, the Italian restaurant at Dusit Thani Dubai, has introduced an exciting new menu helmed by new chef Fabio Genghini, which showcases the diverse varieties of Italian cuisine. Don't miss the specialty dishes, some of which are made using family recipes, such as crab tortelloni in a light cream and white wine lobster sauce; seafood platter with lobster, calamari, gratinated mussels, prawns and seabass, served with saffron rice; and homemade Belgian chocolate flan with a melted dark chocolate centre and Tahitian vanilla ice cream.
Open for dinner only, À la carte menu, call 04-3174515.





Buono appetito!

Casa Mia at Le Meridien Dubai will play host to famed Italian chef and restaurateur Graziano Prest, who will be conducting cooking demonstrations, and creating dishes from his flagship Michelin starred restaurant Tivoli, for a week this month, as part of the Italian World Cuisine Summit 2013 activities. He'll also be serving a seven-course Connoisseurs dinner on November 13.
From November 7-15, Dhs450 per person for the Connoisseurs dinner. Call 04-7022455.

Turkey takeaway

Hosting a Thanksgiving dinner at home? Visit The Gramercy to order a whole turkey, sausage and chestnut stuffing, cinnamon glazed sweet potato, trimmings, pumpkin pie and crème anglaise. All you need to do is set the table!
Dhs750 per order, call 04-4377511.

Bollywood calling

Good food and movies are a great combination! So head to Amala, Jumeirah Zabeel Saray, to catch a rom-com, chick-flick, or action-packed Hindi movie at The Private Screening Room, and enjoy a welcome drink, before trying Indian snacks and an unlimited tasting menu for dinner.
Saturday afternoon or evenings, Dhs285 per person. Call 04-4530000.

Brunch with the amigos

Fuego at Souk Al Bahar is the place to head to for an indulgent Mexican-themed Friday brunch. Sit back, relax to tunes played by the DJ, sip a margarita at the bar, then head to the restaurant side of the outlet to begin the feast which includes authentic delicacies like Huevos Mexican style (eggs), pancakes with Mexican sweetened condensed milk, starters, mains including traditional Mexican grilled fish marinated Sinaloa style (Pescado Sarandeado) or lamb, and popular desserts such as churros.
From Dhs219 per person, call 04-4490977.



Compiled by NICOLA MONTEATH | Photographs SUPPLIED

✳ Fresh and local

Love Lebanese? You'll love the recently opened Massaad Farm to Table restaurant at The Walk, JBR, where delicious Arabic cuisine created exclusively using locally sourced produce and homemade recipes. From mezze platters to succulent lamb chops and shish tawouks, finished off with a delicate mouhlabiya or Qushta ice cream, here you can enjoy authentic flavours in a cosy, rustic-style ambience.
À la carte menu, call 04-3629002.



✳ Pizza and Prosecco? Why not!

Newly opened Jazz@Pizza Express located in JLT is a refreshing alternative to typically hedonistic weekend brunches, with a relaxed vibe, combined with good food and music. This import from London offers an à la carte brunch with light bites like stuffed Portobello mushrooms, mussels and cured meats followed by pizzas of your choice (menus change weekly), and Italian desserts including the classic tiramisu. The entertainment is courtesy of the popular Johanna Sandell Duo who belt out jazz tunes as well as popular classics with equal aplomb.
Friday afternoons, prices start from Dhs99 per person, call 04-4416342.

✳ Asian specials

Taste a plethora of flavours from across Asia, whether it's Thailand, Vietnam, China, or Burma, at Sizzling Wok, Citymax Hotel Bur Dubai, as you relish dishes from the new menu such as tempura prawns, drunken duck sizzler, Cantonese braised beef, vegetable gyoza and various curries. Don't forget to leave space for the fried ice cream for dessert!
À la carte menu, call 04-4078000.



✳ Tea, with an Arabian twist

Al Bayt Lounge at the Palace Downtown Dubai is the place to be seen in at afternoon tea time – a buzzing hive for business meetings and girlie get-togethers alike. Their newly introduced The Palace Cappucino, decorated with 24 carat gold dust, served with macarons, is a must-have. The indulgent drink is best accompanied by the unique Timeless Arabic afternoon tea, which features creative twists on traditional tea-time treats such as saffron and cardamom scones, rose petal cheesecake and mini shawarma sandwiches.
Available daily, Dhs150 for afternoon tea, Dhs80 for The Palace cappuccino. Call 04-4287806.

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table 9
by nick & scott

The Doha diaries

Our Doha-based columnist has his finger on the pulse of the city's foodie scene.

The Great Outdoors

Let's be honest – summer in the region can be a bit of a struggle to say the least. But once you've made it through the 50 degree months, that's when the fun begins. I love the outdoors, and so for me, dining outside is one of the little pleasures of life in Doha.

One of my favorite places for outdoor dining has always been The Pool Grill at the Four Seasons. The restaurant sits on a quaint little terrace on the beach and boasts one of the city's best views of the shimmering Arabian Gulf. Serving up a variety of Arabic and International dishes, it's definitely not a place to go if you're watching the riyals, as it'll set you back by around 300 QR per person. And, if you feel like splashing out, then try the catch of the day – grilled tuna with lemon butter is one of my favourites, you won't be disappointed.

Now, if you're more attracted to the Paris-style street-side dining, then a great place to check out is the terrace at the Orangery Café, in La Cigale Hotel. Located at the front of the hotel, just a few metres from the chaos of C Ring-Road, there's something strangely charming about it. They offer up a decent menu of Arabic and International options, but the crowning glory is the delicious selection of freshly made ice creams, cakes and tarts.

My favorite place to while away a Doha afternoon though, is Café in Museum Park. Park your car in the Museum of Islamic Art, then get set for a bit of a walk as you head towards the sea, following the boardwalk all the way around until you get to the green. Nestled in between the (manufactured) hills, you'll find two cafés – one serving some of the most delicious salads in Qatar (designed by none other than Michelin-starred chef Alain Ducasse) and the other, a selection of mouth-watering homemade waffles and ice cream. You're also treated to one of the best views of West Bay anywhere in the city – get there at 5pm, and catch the sunset.

If you're looking to get away from it all, then head to the Grand Heritage Hotel and check out Blue – a modern restaurant with a stunning terrace, slap bang in the middle of Aspire Park (it's been nominated in the BBC Good Food ME 2013 awards as one of Doha's best restaurants too!). Serving up a generous selection of steaks, seafood and international dishes, as well as some of the best sushi in Doha, there aren't many places in Qatar you can be surrounded in as much greenery as this.

It's not always about restaurants, don't forget there are numerous parks in Doha that will allow you to bring your own picnic – Aspire Park, Dahl Al Hamam Park and Museum Park, to name a few. So trade up from the over air-conditioned restaurants Doha loves, and head outside to soak up some sun.

- Jonathan Parsons is co-owner and editor of Qatar's largest online restaurant guide, www.diningindoha.com.

The latest food news and happenings in the city.

BBQ delights

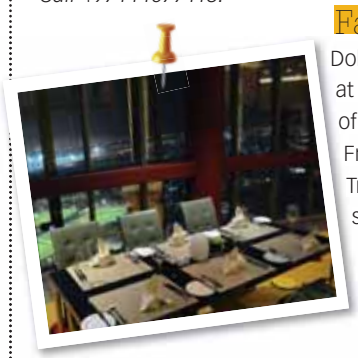


Since alfresco season is here, head to the Lagoon Garden at The Ritz-Carlton Doha for their Thursday Barbecue promotion. Sink your teeth into dishes such as grilled lamb chops with traditional mint jus and grilled Omani lobster tails from the live cooking stations, while taking in the views of the Arabian Gulf waters, perfectly complemented by chilled tunes from the DJ.
QR240 per person, call +974 4484 8512.

Good to go

Spicy Pickle, a franchise from Colorado, has opened its doors at The Gate mall in Doha and is now serving delicious sandwiches such as paninis with gourmet fillings, high quality meats and a selection of cheeses and spreads, as well as homemade soups and salads. A great new option for weekday lunches!
Call +97444077118.

Fancy some French?



Doha's only revolving restaurant, Three Sixty, at The Torch Doha, will be serving a selection of French delicacies at the La Magie De La France promotion throughout this month. Try delicacies like the grilled fillet mignon served with niçoise vegetables, gratin dauphinois and chanterelle mushroom sauce, from the à la carte menu, while enjoying the incomparable city views.
Call +97444465600.

Take your pick!



Looking for artisan cheese to serve at your next cocktail and canapés party? Head to the Fromagerie at Jones the Grocer and choose from their new selection of Italian, French and Swiss cheeses. You'll also find a range of fruit paste, nuts, dried fruit, crisp bread and crackers.
Call +974 44077175.

Additional text NICOLA MONTEATH | Photos SUPPLIED

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Time: 12.30 pm to 3.30 pm
Special price: AED 220 inclusive of soft beverages
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Home Cooking

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Pea & bacon pasties, recipe p52

IN THIS SECTION



- New twists on family supper favourites, **P24**



- Lamb never tasted this good! **P35**



- Seasonal fruits make the best desserts, **P65**

Make it tonight

This month we give five favourite family meals an exciting new twist. They're great value, too! Recipes SARA BUENFELD Photographs SAM STOWELL



Save on washing up – there's no need for cutlery!

Love fish fingers? Try...

Fish tacos

MAKES 4 ● PREP 15 MINS
● COOK 15 MINS Easy Low cal Good for you

220g pack lemon sole goujons
1 tsp chipotle paste or harissa
6 tbsp mayonnaise
4 soft corn tortillas
175g white cabbage, finely shredded
Good handful of chopped coriander
1 small red onion, finely chopped or sliced
Juice of 1 small lime, plus wedges to serve (optional)

1 Heat oven to 220C/200C fan. Space the goujons apart on a baking sheet and bake for 12-15 mins, following pack instructions, until crispy. Meanwhile, mix the chipotle or harissa into the mayo, and warm the tortillas – they are best warmed over a gas flame.
2 To make the salad, toss the cabbage, coriander and onion with the lime juice and some salt.
3 Spread the tortillas with a little spicy mayo, then place the salad and fish down the centre. Top with a little more mayo, then fold and eat with your fingers. Serve with lime wedges, if you like.

PER TACO 312 kcals, protein 13g, carbs 34g, fat 15g, sat fat 2g, fibre 3g, sugar 5g, salt 1.2g

Food styling SARA BUENFELD | Styling REBECCA NEWPORT



Spicy cheese & tomato bake

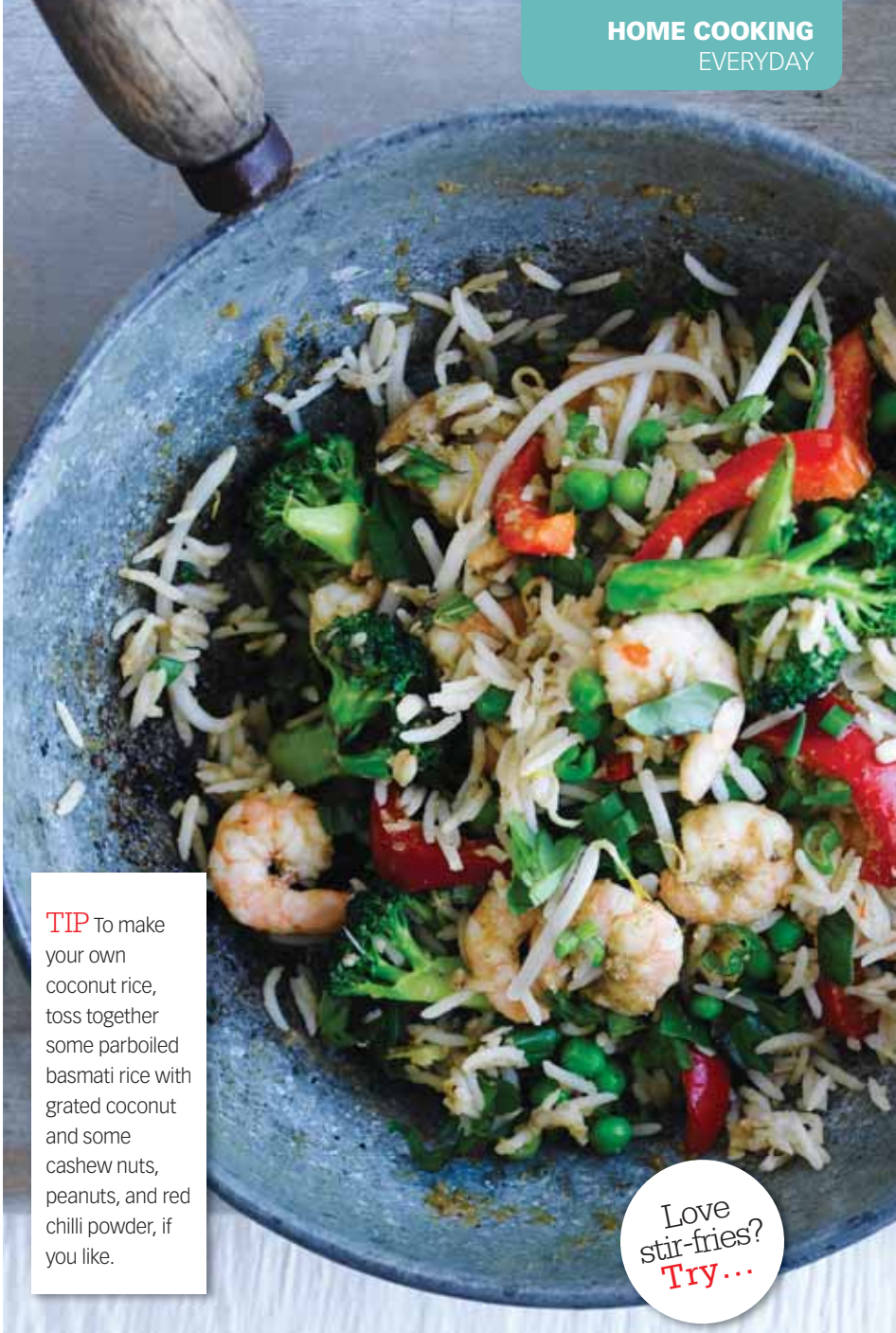
SERVES 4 ● PREP 15 MINS ● COOK 35 MINS Easy V Calcium 1 of 5-a-day

400g pasta shapes
190g jar sundried tomato pesto
1-2 red chillies, deseeded and chopped
250g large cherry tomatoes, halved
1 tsp smoked paprika
50g grated Parmesan (or vegetarian alternative)
150g tub soft goat's cheese, chopped

1 Heat oven to 200C/180C fan and boil the pasta following pack instructions. Meanwhile, tip the pesto, chilli, tomatoes and paprika into a large ovenproof dish. Shake 3 tbsp water in the closed pesto jar to get out the last bits, then pour into the dish and stir everything together. Drain the pasta, tip into the dish, season and mix well with half the Parmesan.
2 Scatter over the goat's cheese, followed by the remaining Parmesan, then bake for 15-20 mins until piping hot and the cheese has melted.

PER SERVING 603 kcals, protein 26g, carbs 57g, fat 30g, sat fat 11g, fibre 3g, sugar 6g, salt 2.2g

TIP Can be prepared the day before and chilled until needed for baking.



TIP To make your own coconut rice, toss together some parboiled basmati rice with grated coconut and some cashew nuts, peanuts, and red chilli powder, if you like.

Thai prawn fried rice

SERVES 2 ● PREP 10 MINS ● COOK 10 MINS Easy Low cal Folate Fibre Vit C Iron 3 of 5-a-day

1 tbsp sunflower oil
1 red pepper, deseeded, quartered and cut into diagonal strips
5 spring onions, whites roughly chopped, greens finely chopped
100g broccoli, cut into small florets
2 tbsp green curry paste
200g raw king prawns, thawed if frozen
250g coconut basmati rice (see Tip)
100g frozen peas
100g beansprouts
Handful of chopped basil
Fish sauce, to taste

1 Heat the oil in a wok and stir-fry the pepper, whites of the onions, and broccoli for a few mins to soften. Stir in the curry paste and prawns, and cook for 1 min more.
2 Add a splash of water, then crumble in the coconut rice, breaking it up with a spoon. Tip in the peas, beansprouts and greens of the onions, and stir-fry until everything has heated through, then add the basil and fish sauce to taste.

PER SERVING 457 kcals, protein 33g, carbs 42g, fat 17g, sat fat 5g, fibre 11g, sugar 10g, salt 1.8g >>

Mexican beef & potato pie

SERVES 4-6 ● PREP 20 MINS ● COOK 1 HR Easy ❄ WITHOUT THE TORTILLAS

1 tbsp cumin seeds
300g jar hot salsa
500g pack lean minced beef
1 beef stock cube
400g can red kidney beans
FOR THE POTATO TOPPING
1kg potato, cut into chunks
50g butter
100g mature cheddar, grated
50g cheese-flavoured tortilla chips

1 Heat oven to 180C/160C fan. Warm the cumin seeds in a large pan and toast for a few secs. Tip the salsa into the pan, then stir in the mince, breaking it up with a wooden spoon. Crumble in the stock cube, tip in the beans with their juice and add a little less than a can of water. Season, then part-cover and simmer for 40 mins, stirring occasionally. If there is still a lot of liquid after 30 mins, remove the lid completely and allow it to reduce a little until thickened.

2 Meanwhile, boil the potatoes until tender, then drain and mash with the butter and seasoning. Spoon the mince into an ovenproof dish and top with the potato, smoothing to cover the meat completely. Mix the cheese with the tortillas, then scatter on top of the pie and bake for 10 mins to melt the cheese – take care that the tortillas don't burn.

PER SERVING (6) 494 kcals, protein 30g, carbs 39g, fat 24g, sat fat 12g, fibre 6g, sugar 4g, salt 2.2g

TIP There's no need to drain the kidney beans for this recipe – as well as adding extra liquid, the starchy juice will help to thicken the texture of the meat.

If you're making this ahead, reheat in the oven for 40 minutes, then top with the cheese and tortillas, and bake for 10 minutes more.



Love shepherd's pie? Try...



Quiche without the pastry

New potatoes Lorraine

SERVES 4 ● PREP 15 MINS ● COOK 30-35 MINS Easy Calcium Folate Vit C P

Love quiche? Try...

650g baby new potatoes
1 tsp olive oil
2 shallots, thinly sliced
200g thick smoked bacon rashers, chopped
4 large eggs
300ml milk
170ml pot double cream
100g cheddar or Gruyère, or a mix of both, grated
Handful of rocket, plus your favourite salad dressing, to serve

1 Heat oven to 180C/160C fan. Boil the potatoes for 10-12 mins until almost tender.

2 Meanwhile, heat the oil in a frying pan and fry the shallots and bacon until the shallots have softened. Beat the eggs, milk and cream with some seasoning.

3 Slice the potatoes thickly – you can skin them first if you like – and place in a large, shallow ovenproof dish.

4 Scatter over the bacon and shallots, then pour over the egg mixture and scatter on the cheese. Bake for 25-30 mins until set. Serve topped with dressed rocket.

PER SERVING 650 kcals, protein 27g, carbs 28g, fat 48g, sat fat 25g, fibre 3g, sugar 6g, salt 2.8g GF

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Recipes JENNIFER JOYCE Photographs LARA HOLMES

Tangy turkey sloppy joes with celeriac slaw

MAKES 6 ● PREP 10 MINS ● COOK 10 MINS Easy ❄ MINCE ONLY

Low fat 1 of 5-a-day

1 tbsp olive oil
2 small red onions, chopped
2 garlic cloves, chopped
500g turkey mince
1 tsp each ground cumin and hot smoked paprika
2 tbsp soft brown sugar
125ml cider vinegar, plus 1 tbsp
500ml passata
75ml low-fat mayonnaise
1 tbsp golden caster sugar
¼ head of celeriac, peeled and grated
2 carrots, grated
6 small soft buns

1 Heat the oil in a large frying pan. Add half the onions, the garlic and some seasoning, and cook for 5 mins. Add the mince and cook until thoroughly browned. Add the cumin, paprika, brown sugar and the 125ml vinegar, and cook for 5 mins more. Pour in the passata and cook for another 10 mins. Set aside and keep warm.

2 In a mixing bowl, combine the 1 tbsp vinegar, the mayo, a little seasoning and the caster sugar. Add the celeriac, carrots and remaining onions, and mix well. Serve the mince mixture on the buns and top with the celeriac slaw.

PER SLOPPY JOE 353 kcals, protein 27g, carbs 43g, fat 8g, sat fat 1g, fibre 5g, sugar 21g, salt 1.2g >>



Low-fat version of a family favourite

Food styling JENNIFER JOYCE | Styling JENNY IGGLEDEN

Orzo with spinach & cherry tomatoes

SERVES 4 ● PREP 5 MINS ● COOK 25 MINS Easy V Low cal Low fat Folate Fibre Vit C 3 of 5-a-day Good for you

400g orzo pasta
2 tbsp olive oil
1 celery heart, chopped
1 red onion, chopped
3 garlic cloves, chopped
2 x 400g cans cherry tomatoes
250g baby spinach
10 black olives, halved
Small handful each of dill and mint, chopped

1 Cook the orzo following pack instructions. Drain, rinse under cold water, drain again and toss with half the olive oil.
2 Meanwhile, heat the remaining oil in a large sauté pan. Add the celery, onion and some seasoning, and cook for 8 mins until soft. Add the garlic, cook for 1 min, then tip in the cherry tomatoes and simmer for 10 mins. Add the spinach, cover with a lid to wilt the leaves, then add the orzo, olives, dill and mint. Season and serve.

PER SERVING 471 kcals, protein 16g, carbs 81g, fat 9g, sat fat 1g, fibre 9g, sugar 10g, salt 0.6g



Low-fat yet filling



New way to top your pizza

Turkish pizza with spiced pomegranate beef & feta

MAKES 6 ● PREP 15 MINS PLUS 1-2 HRS RISING ● COOK 10 MINS

Easy Low fat 1 of 5-a-day

500g pack bread mix
1 tsp olive oil, plus a little extra for the dough
2 medium onions, chopped
2 garlic cloves, chopped
250g extra-lean minced beef
2 tsp each ground cumin and cinnamon
1 tbsp red chilli flakes
5 tbsp tomato purée
6 tbsp pomegranate molasses
400g jar sweet pickled Peppadew peppers, roughly chopped
50g feta, crumbled
1 tbsp pine nuts

1 Mix the dough following pack instructions (leave about 2 tbsp of the bread mix in the bag for dusting and rolling out later). Knead for 8-10 mins, then coat the dough in oil, place in a large bowl and cover. Leave to rise until doubled in size. The warmer your kitchen is, the faster it will rise, but generally it should take 1-2 hrs.
2 Heat oven to 240C/220C fan (or the highest setting). Sprinkle 2 baking trays with a little of the reserved flour and place in the oven to heat up.
3 Heat the olive oil in a large frying pan until hot. Add the onions and garlic, and cook for a few mins until softened. Add the beef and let it brown for about 5 mins, breaking up the mince as it cooks. Pour off any excess oil. Add the spices, chilli, 2 tbsp of the tomato purée, 5 tbsp of the pomegranate molasses and some seasoning. Cook for 1 min, then remove from the heat.
4 Divide the dough into 6 balls. Sprinkle the remaining flour over a work surface and roll out the dough, each to about 25cm across. Remove the trays from the oven and place 2 pizza bases on each (you'll need to cook in batches). Spread the remaining tomato purée on each base. Top with the meat mixture, peppers, feta and pine nuts. Cook for 10 mins or until the bases are cooked through and golden brown around the edges. Drizzle over the remaining pomegranate molasses and serve.

PER PIZZA 439 kcals, protein 20g, carbs 56g, fat 12g, sat fat 4g, fibre 3g, sugar 14g, salt 1.6g



Chicken, kale & sprout stir-fry

SERVES 2 ● PREP 10 MINS
● COOK 20 MINS Easy Low cal Low fat
Folate Vit C 2 of 5-a-day

100g soba noodles
100g shredded curly kale
2 tsp sesame oil
2 lean chicken breasts, skin removed and sliced into thin strips
25g piece fresh ginger, peeled and sliced into matchsticks
1 red pepper, deseeded and thinly sliced
Handful of Brussels sprouts, cut into quarters
1 tbsp low-sodium soy sauce
2 tbsp rice wine or white wine vinegar
Zest and juice of 1 lime

1 Cook the noodles following pack instructions, then drain and set aside. Meanwhile, heat a large wok or frying pan and add the kale along with a good splash of water and cook for 1-2 mins until wilted, with a little bite remaining, then cool under running water to keep the colour.
2 Add half the oil and cook the chicken strips until browned, then remove and set aside. Heat the remaining oil and fry the ginger, pepper and sprouts until softened a little. Return the chicken and kale and add the noodles.
3 Tip in the soy, rice wine and lime zest and juice along with enough water to create a sauce that clings to the ingredients. Serve immediately.

PER SERVING 381 kcals, protein 36g, carbs 50g, fat 6g, sat fat 1g, fibre 5g, sugar 7g, salt 2.1g

Speedy meal for two

KNOW-HOW

Sriracha is a spicy, garlic-scented chilli sauce from Thailand. It's available in most supermarkets, but if you can't find it, substitute another chilli sauce that you like.

Grilled chicken with chilli & sesame seeds

SERVES 2 ● PREP 10 MINS
● COOK 10 MINS Easy Low cal Low fat
Folate Vit C 1 of 5-a-day

2 skinless chicken breasts
1 tbsp vegetable oil
1½ tbsp sriracha chilli sauce (see Know-how)
2 tsp grated ginger
2 tbsp clear honey
2 tbsp rice vinegar
240g pack Tenderstem broccoli
1 tbsp sesame seeds, toasted

1 Slice each chicken breast lengthways into 2 thin pieces. Rub with the oil and season on both sides. Heat a grill pan and cook the pieces for 2-3 mins each side.
2 While the chicken is cooking, mix the chilli sauce, ginger, honey and vinegar with a little seasoning in a small bowl. Brush over the chicken as it cooks – wait until it is grilled on one side first before brushing, or it will burn.
3 Blanch the broccoli, divide between the plates and pour over the remaining sauce. Top with the chicken and sesame seeds.

PER SERVING 303 kcals, protein 35g, carbs 18g, fat 10g, sat fat 2g, fibre 4g, sugar 17g, salt 1.0g DF

5 ways with kale

New ideas for this super-healthy leafy green veg.

Recipes ADAM RUSSELL Photograph STUART OVENDEN

Wilted kale with balsamic dressing

SERVES 4 ● PREP 10 MINS ● COOK 10 MINS

Easy | V | Vit C | Folate | 2 of 5-a-day | Good for you

Heat **1 tbsp olive oil** in a large pan over a medium heat, then add a **chopped red onion** and **3 crushed garlic cloves**. Cook for a few mins, then add **400g chopped kale leaves** and cook until they wilt slightly. Place on a large platter, drizzle with **2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil** and **1 tbsp balsamic vinegar**, then sprinkle over **50g toasted flaked almonds**.

PER SERVING 205 kcals, protein 7g, carbs 8g, fat 16g, sat fat 2g, fibre 5g, sugar 5g, salt 0.1g

Kale stew with chorizo, beans & peppers

SERVES 4 ● PREP 15 MINS ● COOK 15 MINS

Easy | P | Vit C | 2 of 5-a-day

Thickly slice **225g cooking chorizo** and add to a large pan with **3 crushed garlic cloves**. Cook over a medium heat for a few mins until the chorizo starts to sizzle, then add **700ml vegetable stock** and bring to the boil.Add **400g chopped kale leaves**, a **400g can cannellini beans**, drained and rinsed, and **200g roasted red peppers**, cut into strips. Cook for 3-4 mins, then spoon into bowls and serve with crusty bread.

PER SERVING 278 kcals, protein 18g, carbs 17g, fat 15g, sat fat 6g, fibre 5g, sugar 5g, salt 1.7g

Italian kale salad

SERVES 4 ● PREP 15 MINS ● NO COOK

Easy | Vit C | Folate | Calcium

Mix **juice 1 lemon** with **125ml extra virgin olive oil** and **1 tsp dried chilli flakes**. Drizzle over **400g chopped kale leaves**, then let sit for 8-10 mins. Mix in **50g dried breadcrumbs** and top with **50g shaved Parmesan**.

PER SERVING 411 kcals, protein 10g, carbs 11g, fat 37g, sat fat 7g, fibre 3g, sugar 2g, salt 0.6g

Kale bubble & squeak

SERVES 4 ● PREP 15 MINS ● COOK 40 MINS

Easy | Vit C | Folate | P

Cook **750g potatoes**, cut into chunks, in boiling salted water until tender. Drain well.

Cook **100g bacon lardons** in a deep frying pan until crisp, remove with a slotted spoon, add **3 chopped shallots** and cook for a few mins to soften. Add **300g chopped kale leaves** and a splash of water, wilt for 1-2 mins, then add everything to the potatoes. Season with salt and pepper and mash together.

Place a **knob of butter** in the frying pan, then add the potato mix, pressing everything down with a spatula. Cook for 5 mins, then carefully flip over (see tip, right) and cook the other side for 5 mins more to crisp up and brown. Serve with a dressed rocket salad.

PER SERVING 364 kcals, protein 8g, carbs 31g, fat 23g, sat fat 9g, fibre 5g, sugar 3g, salt 0.5g

Stir-fried kale

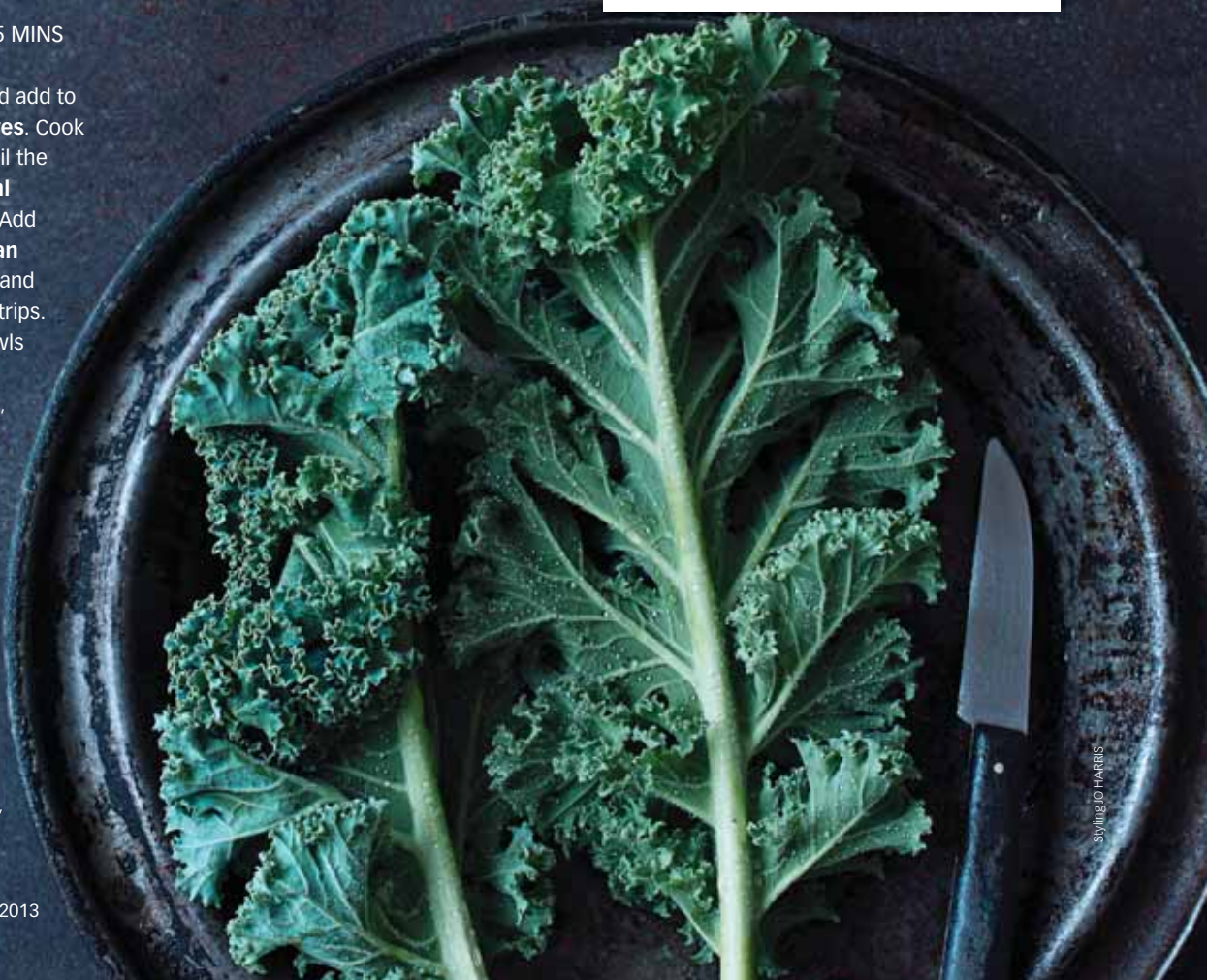
SERVES 4 ● PREP 10 MINS ● COOK 10 MINS

Easy | Low fat | Good for you

Pour **1 tbsp oil** into a wok set over a high heat. Add **2-3 deseeded and thinly sliced red chillies**, **4 crushed garlic cloves** and a **thumb-sized piece ginger**, finely chopped. Cook for a few mins. Add **400g chopped kale leaves**, a splash of water, **1 tbsp soy sauce** and **1 tbsp oyster sauce**. Cook for 2-3 mins.

PER SERVING 70 kcals, protein 4g, carbs 3g, fat 4g, sat fat 1g, fibre 3g, sugar 2g, salt 1.2g GF

TIP Place a baking sheet or plate over the frying pan to flip the bubble & squeak over, then slide it back into the frying pan to cook the other side.



Styling JO HARRIS

SWEET TOOTH PURSUIT

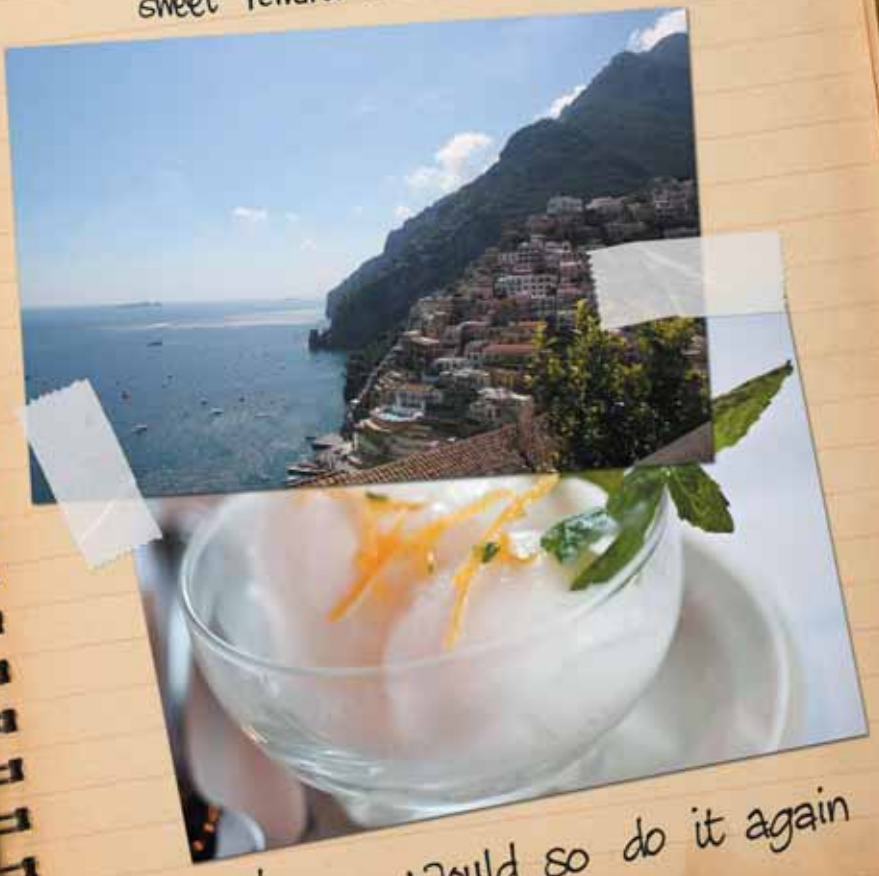
342 steps!!! up to the restaurant





Thanks step number 160 something..

By the time we made it to the restaurant we'd lost a shoe, were gasping for air and could barely stand upright from clambering up what seemed like never-ending steps. But we made it, to dessert heaven, and what a gloriously sweet reward it turned out to be.



Yum..... Would so do it again

PASSIONATELY ITALIAN

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Some folks go to great lengths to sample authentic coastal Italian cuisine. Who can blame them? No one can resist a decadent, lemon-infused gelato dessert with a touch of Italian charm. Fortunately, you don't have to go as far.

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Hearty lamb

Whether it's a slow-cooked stew or a simple tray bake, lamb makes a comforting supper on cooler days.



Fruity lamb tagine

SERVES 4 ● PREP 15 MINS PLUS MARINATING ● COOK 1½ HRS Easy

2 tbsp olive oil
500g lean diced lamb
1 large onion, roughly chopped
2 large carrots, quartered lengthways and cut into chunks
2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
2 tbsp Ras el hanout spice mix (see tip)
400g can chopped tomatoes
400g can chickpeas, rinsed and drained
200g dried apricots
600ml chicken stock
TO SERVE
120g pack pomegranate seeds
2 large handfuls coriander, roughly

1 Heat oven to 180C/160C fan. Heat the oil in a casserole and brown the lamb on all sides. Scoop the lamb out onto a plate, then add the onion and carrots and cook for 2-3 mins until golden. Add the garlic and cook for 1 min more. Stir in the spices and tomatoes, and season. Tip the lamb back in with the chickpeas and apricots. Pour over the stock, stir and bring to a simmer. Cover the dish and place in the oven for 1 hr.
2 If the lamb is still a little tough, give it 20 mins more until tender. When ready, leave it to rest so it's not piping hot, then serve scattered with pomegranate and herbs, with couscous or rice alongside.

PER SERVING 497 kcals, protein 40g, carbs 46g, fat 18g, sat fat 5g, fibre 12g, sugar 32g, salt 1.37g

TIP Ras el hanout, a North African spice mix, contains cardamom, cinnamon, clove, coriander, cumin, nutmeg, turmeric and black pepper. Find it in larger supermarkets, or use a mix of the spices above.



Lamb & vegetable tray bake

SERVES 4 ● PREP 15 MINS ● COOK 40 MINS Easy

50g fresh white breadcrumbs
250g lamb mince
1 egg, beaten
2 onions, halved
Large handful of mint, chopped
2 large potatoes, cut into wedges
2 courgettes, cut into batons
12 cherry tomatoes
2 tbsp olive oil
50g feta, crumbled

1 Heat oven to 200C/180C fan. Pop the breadcrumbs, lamb mince, egg and plenty of seasoning in a bowl. Grate in half an onion and sprinkle in half the chopped mint. Give everything a good mix and shape into 8 patties. Place on a large, shallow roasting tray.
2 Cut the remaining onion halves into wedges. Place them on the tray around the lamb patties with the potatoes, courgettes and cherry tomatoes. Drizzle with olive oil and season. Bake for around 40 mins, turning everything once, until the lamb is cooked through and the vegetables are tender. Remove from the oven and sprinkle with feta and remaining mint.

PER SERVING 388 kcals, protein 22g, carbs 35g, fat 19g, sat fat 7g, fibre 3g, sugar 7g, salt 0.77g >>

Lamb with chickpeas & rice

SERVES 2 ● PREP 5 MINS
● COOK 15 MINS Easy

½ tbsp sunflower oil
350g lamb neck fillet, trimmed of fat, thickly sliced
1 red pepper, deseeded and chopped
1 green chilli, deseeded and sliced
Small knob of fresh ginger, peeled and grated
250g pack instant pilau rice
300g can chickpeas, drained
20g pack coriander, chopped

1 Heat the oil in a large pan, then fry the lamb until it starts to brown. Add the pepper and continue frying until it starts to soften.
2 Stir in the chilli and ginger, cook for 2 mins, then tip in the rice and chickpeas. Sprinkle over 3 tbsp water, then toss everything together until heated through. Stir in the coriander and serve as it is or with raita.

PER SERVING 706 kcals, protein 46g, carbs 58g, fat 34g, sat fat 13g, fibre 6g, sugar 5g, salt 3.21g

TIP Making raita at home is as easy as simply mixing plain yoghurt with grated cucumber and mint.





New way to serve lamb

Greek lamb with potatoes & olives

SERVES 4 ● PREP 20 MINS
● COOK 1 HR 10 MINS Easy

800g medium-size potatoes, skin on, thinly sliced
4 large tomatoes, thinly sliced
1 aubergine, thinly sliced
4 garlic cloves, chopped
3 tbsp oregano leaves, plus extra to serve
85g pitted Kalamata olives, halved
5 tbsp olive oil, plus a drizzle
100g feta, crumbled
4 lamb steaks

1 Heat oven to 200C/180C fan. Layer half the potato, tomato and aubergine in a dish. Scatter over garlic, oregano and olives, and drizzle with oil and season as you go. Top with feta, then repeat the layers. Finish with potatoes and a little oil.
2 Bake for 50 mins or until the veg are tender (cover if they're getting too brown). Add the lamb, rub with more oil and season. Bake for 15-20 mins until the lamb is cooked. Scatter with oregano to serve.

PER SERVING 772 kcals, protein 38g, carbs 42g, fat 51g, sat fat 19g, fibre 6g, sugar 8g, salt 2.03g



Slow cook until beautifully tender

Three-hour shoulder of lamb

SERVES 4 ● PREP 10 MINS
● COOK 3½ HRS Easy

2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
1 tbsp oregano, roughly chopped
1 tbsp olive oil
1 shoulder of lamb, boned and tied, approx 1.5kg
400g pearl onions or shallots
250ml lamb stock
100g fresh peas
100g fresh broad beans
2 Little Gem lettuce, cut into quarters
Juice of 1 lemon
small handful mint, roughly chopped

1 Heat oven to 140C/120C fan. Mix the garlic, oregano and olive oil with some seasoning. Slash the lamb all over and rub in the herb mix. Put in a deep casserole dish with the onions, pour over the stock, cover tightly and cook 3 hrs.
2 Take out the lamb, stir through the peas and broad beans. Sit the lamb back on top of the veg and return to the oven. Increase oven to 180C/160C fan and roast, uncovered, for another 20-30 mins until the lamb is browned, adding the lettuce for the final 5 mins. Rest for 20 mins, then add the lemon juice and mint to the cooking juices. Carve the lamb into thick slices and lay them back on top of the veg to make serving easier.

PER SERVING 976 kcals, protein 72g, carbs 9g, fat 73g, sat fat 35g, fibre 5g, sugar 5g, salt 0.95g GF

Thai traditions

Join in the Loy Krathong festivities this month at Benjarong, Dusit Thani Dubai, the city's only royal Thai restaurant.

There's no better place to find an authentic Thai experience in Dubai than Benjarong restaurant, where traditional cuisine is lovingly prepared by a team of Thai chefs headed by the award-winning Naruemol Poolkuan. Centuries-old recipes of the Royal Thai style of cuisine are recreated to perfection, with a highlight being the intricate fruit and vegetable carvings which make an appearance in many dishes.

Menu

Appetiser
Kratong Tong
tartlets filled with minced chicken and corn seed

Salad
Larb Goong Hua Pree
minced prawns and banana blossom with roasted ground rice and Thai herbs

Soup
Gaeng Jued Tao Hu Onn
soft egg bean curd stuffed with minced chicken in clear soup

Main Course
Gaeng Kiew Warn Goong
green curry prawns with Thai eggplant and sweet basil
Hor Mok Pla Krapong
steamed curry fish paste with red snapper in banana leaf cup
Gai Tod Kratieam Prigthai
fried chicken sliced with garlic and pepper sauce
Pad Pak Ruammit
sautéed mixed vegetables and oyster sauce
Khao Soey
steamed jasmine rice

Desserts
Khaonom Gluey
steamed rice flour, banana and coconut flake
Khaonom Faktong
steamed rice flour pumpkin and coconut flake
Khaonom Sod Sai
steamed rice flour stuffed with sweet coconut flake

The set menu is available between November 17-30, and is priced at Dhs249.

Dusit Thani

To find out more and book:
Call 04-3174515.
Visit www.dusit.com

The setting matches the food, with the elegant décor which echoes that of historic Thai royal palaces – think dark wood, imperial pillars, and patterned walls and rugs. The authenticity is heightened in one of the three private dining areas which features low seating. The traditional atmosphere is completed with the live music provided by a Thai musician playing the Khim – a brass-string instrument played with bamboo sticks.

Loy Krathong is an annual festival held in the middle of the Thai lunar month when floating decorations are traditionally set afloat on a river, in order to, according to history, pay respect to the water spirits. The colourful, magical festival is brought to life in Dubai at Benjarong through its special festive menu (see left).

CREATE A FESTIVE CELEBRATION AT HOME WITH THIS CLASSIC THAI RECIPE



Gaeng Kiew Warn Goong
(Green curry prawns with Thai eggplant and sweet basil)

SERVES 4 ● PREP 10 MINS ● COOK 5-8 MINS

250ml coconut milk
40g green curry paste
150g prawns
100g eggplants
20g sugar
15ml fish sauce
3 pcs red chili
8g sweet basil
3 pcs Kaffir lime leaves
FOR THE CURRY PASTE
100g lemongrass, sliced
60g galangal, sliced
40g garlic, peeled
20g shallot, peeled
20g shrimp paste
80g Kaffier lime fruit
80g small green chilli
50ml vegetable oil

1 To make the paste, blend all the ingredients and mix well until it turns into a paste.
2 Heat oil and fry the curry paste until it turns fragrant.
3 Bring the coconut milk to the boil, then add green curry paste and simmer. Add chicken and eggplant. Season to taste with sugar and fish sauce.
4 Add the chili, sweet basil and Kaffir lime leaves, then remove from heat. Serve with hot steamed or jasmine rice.

Benjarong
ROYAL THAI CUISINE



งานเฉลิมฉลองประเพณีลอยกระทง

Loy Krathong Culinary Celebration

Experience one of the most renowned cultural festivities in Thailand as Dusit Thani Dubai celebrates Loy Krathong this November with authentic specialties and live musical performances amidst the majestic setting of Benjarong reminiscent of Thai royalty.

For more enquiries and reservations please contact:
Tel: +971 4 317 4515, Email: dine.dtdu@dusit.com

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DUBAI

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INDIAN FOOD FAIR • 7.00PM - 11.30PM • AED 149 FOOD ONLY

Embrace the bustling atmosphere of this market style dining experience. Interact with vibrant hawker food stalls full of regional favourites like Tangadi Kebab and Achari Paneer.

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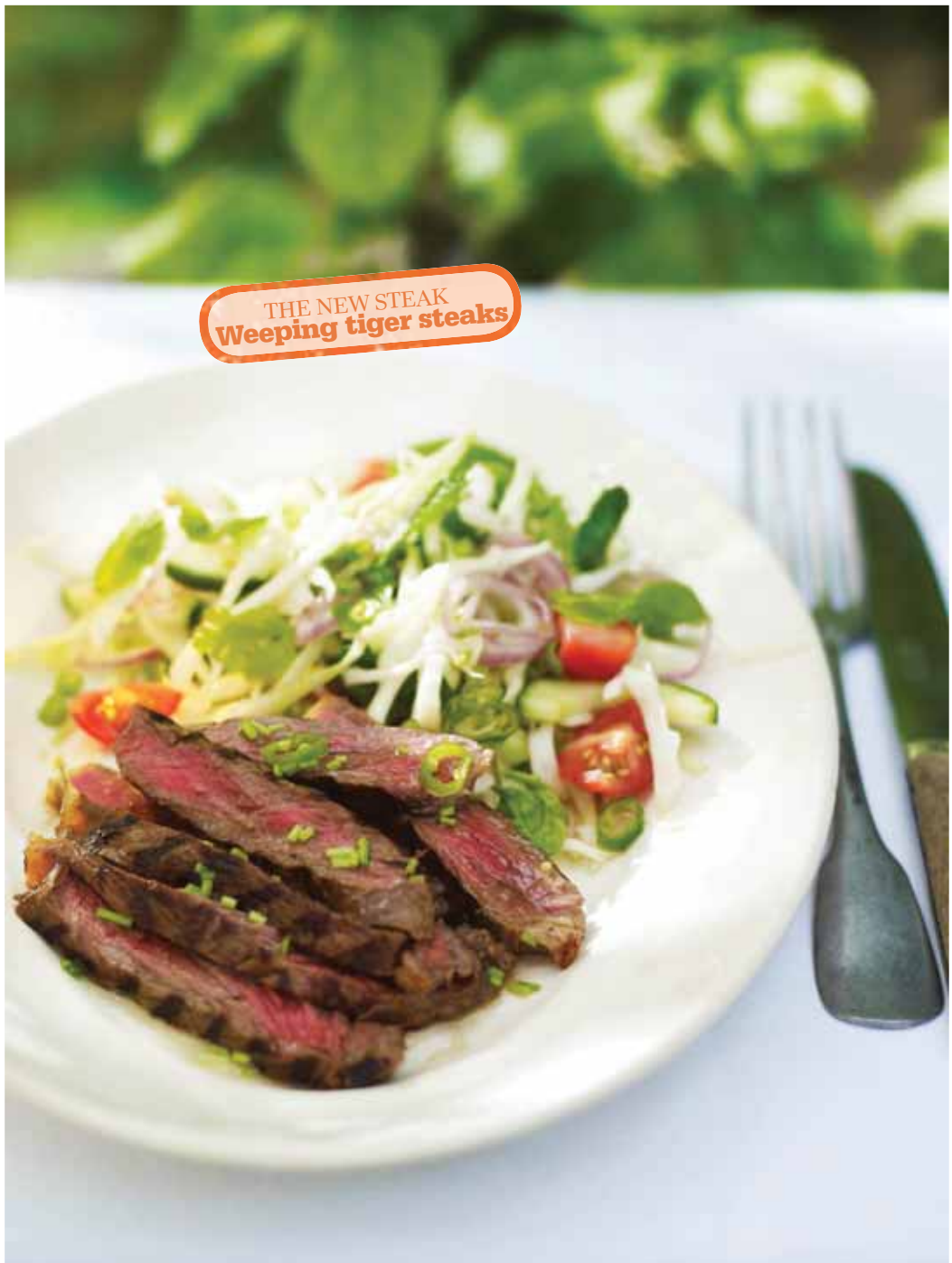
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New flames

Give all your barbecue favourites a fresh twist for this season. Recipes Barney Desmazery Photographs MYLES NEW

Five great BBQ ideas!



Food styling SARAH COOK and MARY CADOGAN | Styling STUART OVENDEN

Weeping tiger steaks

SERVES 4 ● PREP 20 MINS ● COOK 10 MINS PLUS RESTING

Easy | Low cal | Folate | Vit C | 3 of 5-a-day

4 x 200g sirloin steaks
FOR THE MARINADE
Juice of 2 limes
1 tsp golden caster sugar
Pinch of ground coriander
Splash of soy sauce
FOR THE DRESSING
Juice of 2 limes
1 tbsp fish sauce
2 tsp brown sugar
1-2 green Thai chillies, finely sliced
Small bunch of coriander stalks, very finely chopped (use the leaves below)
FOR THE SALAD
½ cucumber, halved lengthways, deseeded and thinly sliced
2 handfuls cherry tomatoes, quartered
Large handful each of mint leaves, basil leaves and coriander leaves
1 shallot, sliced into thin rings
½ small white cabbage, very finely sliced
Large bunch of fine green beans, very finely sliced

1 To make the marinade, mix all the ingredients until the sugar dissolves, then pour over the steaks. Leave to marinate for no longer than 2 hrs or the meat will turn pappy. Meanwhile, fire up your barbecue coals and wait for them to turn ashen.

2 Mix all the dressing ingredients together. Toss the salad ingredients with half the dressing and set aside. When the coals are ashen, sear the steak for 3-4 mins on each side for medium-rare, then leave to rest for 5 mins. Carve the steaks into thin slices and fan out on the sides of the plates. Place a pile of salad on the other side of each plate and drizzle the remaining dressing over everything.

PER SERVING 328 kcals, protein 34g, carbs 11g, fat 16g, sat fat 7g, fibre 5g, sugar 10g, salt 1.2g >>

TIP This recipe is hot – hence the word 'weeping'! The marinade and salad also work well with chicken thighs or skewered prawns.



THE NEW BURGER
Chicken tikka burgers

Chicken tikka burgers

SERVES 6 ● PREP 20 MINS PLUS 2-3 HRS MARINATING ● COOK 15 MINS

Easy | Low cal | Low fat | Folate | 1 of 5-a-day

Chicken tikka is traditionally cooked in a clay oven; a kettle BBQ with a lid is a good alternative. These also work wrapped in warm naan bread.

6 small chicken breasts
6 ciabatta slices (or burger buns)
FOR THE MARINADE
2 tbsp tomato purée
200g pot Greek yoghurt
Thumb-sized piece of ginger, very finely grated
4 garlic cloves, very finely grated or crushed
2 tbsp garam masala
½ tsp ground cinnamon
½ tsp ground cayenne pepper
Juice of 1 lemon, plus wedges to serve
FOR THE CHUTNEY
2 tomatoes, chopped
1 small red onion, chopped
1 green chilli, chopped
1 tsp tamarind pulp
2 tbsp tomato ketchup
FOR THE SALAD
½ cucumber, sliced
1 Little Gem lettuce, shredded
Small bunch of mint, leaves picked
1 small red onion, halved and finely sliced

1 Mix the marinade ingredients in a bowl. Open out each chicken breast and flatten slightly. Place the chicken in the marinade for at least 2-3 hrs. Meanwhile, mix the chutney ingredients together and set aside. (It will keep in the fridge overnight.)

2 Heat the BBQ until the coals are ashen, then griddle the chicken for 4-5 mins on each side until cooked through. Toss the salad ingredients and place the chicken in the buns with the salad and spoonfuls of chutney. Serve with lemon wedges.

PER SERVING 438 kcals, protein 37g, carbs 52g, fat 9g, sat fat 3g, fibre 5g, sugar 10g, salt 1.7g



Citrus-spiked sea bass

SERVES 4 ● PREP 15 MINS
● COOK 15 MINS Easy Low cal
Folate Vit C 1 of 5-a-day Good for you

2-3 large oranges
Zest of 1 lemon (use the juice below)
1 tbsp olive oil
4 x 300g whole small sea bass, scaled, gutted and slashed a few times down each side
FOR THE SALAD
2 oranges, segmented
Juice 1 lemon
4 tbsp olive oil
2 bags watercress
Handful of small capers
Handful of pitted green olives, roughly chopped

1 Finely grate the zest of 1 of the oranges and add to the lemon zest. Mix with the olive oil, then drizzle over the fish and season. Cut the rest of the oranges into slices about 5mm thick. When the coals are ashen, arrange the orange slices over the barbecue in groups the length of each fish. Char the orange slices on 1 side, then flip them over and lay the fish on top of them – this stops the fish sticking. Barbecue the fish for 5-8 mins on each side (turning them carefully), or until the flesh flakes away easily when prodded.
2 While the fish is barbecuing (or beforehand), make the salad. Put the orange segments in a large bowl with the squeezed juice from the rest of the oranges and the lemon juice. Season and stir in the olive oil. When the fish is cooked, toss the watercress in the orange dressing with the capers and olives. Serve the fish with the salad.

PER SERVING 433 kcals, protein 52g, carbs 8g, fat 21g, sat fat 3g, fibre 3g, sugar 8g, salt 0.9g



Merguez lamb kebabs

MAKES 8 ● PREP 25 MINS
● COOK 15 MINS Easy

Merguez are highly spiced lamb sausages from North Africa, and you can use the same fragrant flavour combination to make delicious lamb kebabs. This recipe makes large, chunky kebabs. If you prefer them authentically finger-sized, mould them smaller onto shorter skewers and cook them for less time.

2 tbsp each cumin seeds, coriander seeds and fennel seeds
1 tbsp paprika
2 tbsp harissa, plus extra to serve
4 garlic cloves, finely minced
½ tsp ground cinnamon
800g lean minced lamb
Freshly chopped coriander and flatbreads, to serve
FOR THE YOGHURT
3 carrots, coarsely grated
2 tsp cumin seeds, toasted
200g pot Greek yoghurt
Small handful each of chopped coriander and mint

1 Soak 8 wooden skewers in water. Toast all the whole spices in a small pan. Tip into a mortar and grind with a pestle, then mix in with the paprika, harissa, garlic and cinnamon. Scrape into a bowl with the meat, season and squish together with your fingers. Mould the mix into 8 long kebabs, straight onto the skewers. *Can be done up to a day ahead.*
2 When the coals are ashen, barbecue for 10-15 mins, turning occasionally, until cooked through. The fat from the kebabs can cause flare-ups, so be careful. While the kebabs are cooking, mix all the ingredients for the yogurt. Scatter the kebabs and yoghurt with coriander, and serve with extra harissa and warm flatbreads.

PER KEBAB 250 kcals, protein 22g, carbs 5g, fat 17g, sat fat 8g, fibre 1g, sugar 4g, salt 0.3g >>



THE NEW VEGETARIAN
Aubergine parcels

Melting-middle aubergine parcels

MAKES 8 ● PREP 15 MINS ● COOK 15 MINS Easy V Calcium Folate Fibre 2 of 5-a-day

Make sure you dedicate a section of the barbecue to cooking your vegetarian food so that it doesn't come into contact with any meat juices.

3 aubergines
Drizzle of olive oil
2 x 125g balls mozzarella, drained and sliced
2 plum tomatoes, each cut into 4 thick slices
8 basil leaves
FOR THE PESTO DRESSING
Small handful of basil leaves
2 tbsp pine nuts
2 garlic cloves
2 tbsp grated Parmesan (or vegetarian alternative)
150ml olive oil

1 To make the dressing, blitz all the ingredients, except the oil, in a food processor; then, with the motor still running, drizzle in the oil. Tip into a bowl and set aside.

2 Trim off either end of the aubergines and discard. Slice the aubergines lengthways into 16 slices in total. Over a barbecue (or on a hot griddle pan), heavily mark the aubergine slices on each side to soften, then lift into a dish, drizzle with a little olive oil and season.

3 Working methodically, make little stacks of a mozzarella slice, tomato slice and basil leaf. Wrap each stack in a grilled aubergine slice, then wrap a second slice in the other direction to try to cover the gaps and make a little bundle. Secure each parcel with a couple of cocktail sticks. *Can be kept in the fridge overnight.*

4 Place the parcels on the barbecue and continue to char on each side until the cheese just starts to ooze out. Lift onto a platter, drizzle with the pesto dressing and serve.

PER PARCEL 454 kcals, protein 17g, carbs 8g, fat 40g, sat fat 13g, fibre 8g, sugar 7g, salt 0.7g GF

TIP If you're short of time, you could simply buy a tub of fresh pesto. Keep any leftover pesto in the fridge and stir through pasta for a speedy supper.

Barney's essential barbecue tips

- **Control the heat**

When cooking with charcoal, build your barbecue with lots of coals on one side, graduating to none on the other. This will give you a range of temperatures to cook over.

- **Be patient**

Once you've lit your coals, they will take about 40 minutes to reach the optimum temperature, and will give you about 30 minutes of cooking heat. For longer cooking, keep adding a few more coals every 10 minutes to maintain the heat.

To cook sausages or burgers all the way through without burning them on the outside, check the heat – you should be able to hold your hand over the coals where the food lies for about five seconds.

- **Check food is cooked**

There are two foolproof ways to tell if food is cooked properly. The first is to remove it and cut it open. The second – and the one I've become a big fan of – is to use a digital cooking thermometerww. A reading of 70C and above will guarantee that your chicken or sausages are cooked all the way through.

- **Safety first**

Always barbecue in an open space with nothing overhead, such as trees, bushes or canopies.

- **Good gadgets**

A water spray is handy for dampening flare-ups, but make sure that it's set to mist function, as a spray function will shoot ash up over the food. I also like a pair of long-handled tongs for turning and moving food without burning myself.

- **Cleaning up**

The easiest way is while the barbecue is still warm – simply use a ball of scrunched-up foil and a pair of tongs. The foil gets right into the grooves of the bars and scrapes away all the burnt food.



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James Martin's BBQ hits



If the temperatures have lowered and the sun is shining, here are three great reasons to fire up the barbecue. Photographs MYLES NEW



Halloumi & pepper kebabs with lemony cabbage salad

SERVES 4 ● PREP 20 MINS ● COOK 20 MINS Easy V Folate Vit C 2 of 5-a-day

The Cypriot cheese halloumi is a great choice for meat-free kebabs as it doesn't melt, and stays firmly on the skewers as the kebabs cook. If you're using wooden skewers, soak them in water before using – this stops them from burning.

500g halloumi, cut into cubes
3 red peppers, deseeded and cut into squares
1 tbsp olive oil
1 tsp oregano (fresh or dried)
FOR THE SALAD
500g red cabbage, finely shredded
2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
Juice of ½ lemon
Handful of parsley, finely shredded
Pita breads and tzatziki, to serve

1 Thread the halloumi and red peppers onto 8 soaked wooden skewers and put on a plate. Stir the oil and oregano together, then drizzle it over the kebabs. Season well with black pepper – you shouldn't need salt.
2 To make the salad, put the cabbage in a bowl. Mix together the oil, lemon juice and seasoning, pour over the cabbage, and toss until well coated, then stir through the parsley.
3 Barbecue the skewers for 10 mins on each side until the cheese is golden and the peppers slightly charred. Serve on a large platter with pita breads and tzatziki, with salad on the side.

PER SERVING 546 kcals, protein 29g, carbs 13g, fat 42g, sat fat 22g, fibre 5g, sugar 12g, salt 3.9g

MAKE IT GLUTEN FREE Use gluten-free wraps instead of pita breads.

Food styling SARAH COOK | Styling STUART OVENDEN

'Cooking over the coals is a great way to relax with friends. It's unhurried, plus you get those enticing smells as the food sizzles away. There's no need to rely on prime cuts like steak to impress – my recipes use cheaper options, like chicken thighs. It's what you do with them that counts.'

– James Martin

Bang bang chicken with Sichuan salad

SERVES 4 ● PREP 25 MINS PLUS MARINATING ● COOK 40 MINS

Easy | Folate | 1 of 5-a-day

FOR THE SALAD
1 tsp Sichuan peppercorns
1 large cucumber, peeled, deseeded and cut into matchsticks
2 large carrots, cut into matchsticks
1 bunch spring onions, shredded
1 tbsp sesame oil
Juice of ½ lime
Handful of chopped coriander
FOR THE CHICKEN
1kg pack chicken drumsticks and thighs
1 tbsp olive oil
1 tsp Chinese five-spice
FOR THE SAUCE
140g chunky peanut butter
100ml low-sodium soy sauce
1 tbsp rice vinegar
1 tbsp toasted sesame oil
2 tbsp granulated sugar
2 red chillies, deseeded and finely chopped

1 Toast the peppercorns in a small frying pan until they begin to darken. Remove and cool, then crush with a large pinch of salt using a pestle and mortar. Mix in a bowl with the cucumber. Set aside.
2 Put the chicken in a bowl and rub in the oil and five-spice, leaving to marinate for an hour or use straight away. Cook on the barbecue, turning regularly, for 35-40 mins until the juices run clear.
3 Whisk together all the ingredients for the sauce until smooth, adding water if needed.
4 Drain the cucumber and mix through the carrots, spring onions, sesame oil, lime juice and coriander. Serve everything on a big platter to share.

PER SERVING 603 kcals, protein 31g, carbs 22g, fat 43g, sat fat 9g, fibre 5g, sugar 21g, salt 3.6g >>

Bang bang chicken with Sichuan salad

Pork & thyme cheeseburgers

MAKES 4 BURGERS ● PREP 15 MINS ● COOK 20 MINS Easy ❄ UNCOOKED BURGERS ONLY P

The mince in this recipe can be esaily swapped for beef or chicken. Bitter leaves work well with the sweet apple, so if you have any frisée or radicchio, use that. But, if you're making for kids, they'll probably enjoy a milder leaf.

25g butter
1 onion, grated
500g pack lean pork mince
2 egg yolks
1 tbsp finely chopped thyme
TO SERVE
4 slices cheddar
4 tbsp chunky apple sauce
4 soft burger buns, split
Handful of salad leaves

1 Melt the butter in a small frying pan, add the onion and cook on a medium heat until soft and translucent, then cool. Tip the mince into a large bowl and add the onion, egg yolks and thyme. Season well and mix together with your hands – don't overhandle or you will make the burgers tough. Divide the mixture into 4 and shape into burgers. Chill for 30 mins to firm up.
2 Heat the barbecue and cook the burgers for 10 mins each side. Top each burger with a slice of cheese, followed by 1 tbsp apple sauce, then return to the barbecue and close the lid, cooking for a further 5 mins to allow the cheese to melt. If your barbecue doesn't have a lid, loosely cover with foil.
3 Quickly toast the buns, then serve with the burgers and some salad leaves inside.

PER BURGER 508 kcals, protein 35g, carbs 27g, fat 28g, sat fat 13g, fibre 2g, sugar 6g, salt 1.3g GF

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Pack a posh picnic

Turn a picnic into a memorable meal with these new stylish, easy-to-pack recipes.

Recipes Cassie Best Photographs STUART OVENDEN



Beetroot, orange & hazelnut salad

SERVES 8 ● PREP 10 MINS ● NO COOK

Easy | V | Low fat | Folate | Vit C | 1 of 5-a-day | Good for you | GLUTEN FREE

280g bag green beans, stem end trimmed
3 large oranges
250g cooked beetroot (not in vinegar), cut into slim wedges
100g toasted hazelnuts, roughly chopped
150g bag baby spinach leaves
FOR THE DRESSING
2 tbsp white wine vinegar
2 tbsp clear honey
2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil

1 Cook the beans in boiling water for 2 mins, drain and run under cool water until cold, then drain well – they should still have a nice crunch. Using a sharp knife, remove the peel, then segment the oranges. Squeeze the juice from the pith into a small jam jar.
2 Layer the orange segments, beetroot, beans, hazelnuts and finally the spinach into a large plastic food container ready for the picnic – this way the spinach won't go soggy.
3 Add the remaining ingredients for the dressing to the jam jar with some seasoning, seal and pack into your salad box. When you're ready to serve, toss the salad and dressing together.

PER SERVING 178 kcals, protein 5g, carbs 15g, fat 11g, sat fat 1g, fibre 5g, sugar 14g, salt 0.2g

Food styling SARAH COOK | Styling STUART OVENDEN

Hot-smoked salmon picnic loaf

SERVES 8-10 ● PREP 30 MINS PLUS 2 HRS PRESSING ● NO COOK Easy Omega-3

140g mayonnaise
3 tbsp wholegrain mustard
Zest of 1 lemon, plus 1 tbsp juice
Small bunch of dill, finely chopped
2 x long flat loaves of bread (we used long ciabatta)
4 fillets hot smoked salmon (about 320g), skin removed and flaked
2 tbsp small capers, rinsed
1 small cucumber, thinly sliced
100g radishes, thinly sliced
2 large handfuls rocket, watercress or pea shoots

1 Mix the mayo, mustard, lemon zest, dill and some seasoning in a bowl. Split the loaves in half lengthways and scoop out a little of the bread from the base of each loaf, giving you a hollow to fill.
2 Spread the mustardy mayo over the bread. Toss the flaked salmon with the lemon juice and capers, and divide between the loaves, filling the hollow base. Top with cucumber, radish and salad leaves, then press the lid on top.
3 Wrap each loaf in baking parchment, tie with string to secure, then place on a tray in the fridge. Weigh the loaves down by placing a chopping board and a few heavy cans on top. Leave for at least 2 hrs, or for up to 1 day before eating – this will press the loaves, making them easier to transport and eat. Pack into cool bags and slice into sandwiches when you are ready to eat.

PER SERVING (10) 303 kcals, protein 15g, carbs 28g, fat 15g, sat fat 2g, fibre 2g, sugar 3g, salt 2.8g >>



TIP Lots of these recipes don't require cutlery, so you won't have to load up the picnic basket with too many utensils.



Pea & bacon pasties

MAKES 10-12 ● PREP 20 MINS ● COOK 25 MINS Easy ❄ P

200g pack smoked bacon lardons, cut into small pieces (can be swapped with turkey bacon)
225g frozen peas
140g mascarpone
25g Parmesan, grated, plus a little extra for the tops
2 medium eggs
Small handful of mint, leaves chopped
375g puff pastry
Plain flour, for rolling

1 Put the lardons in a large frying pan, cook until crisp, about 8 mins, then drain on kitchen paper. Meanwhile, pour kettle-hot water over the peas and leave to stand for 5 mins, then drain well.
2 Heat oven to 200C/180C fan. When the bacon and peas have cooled, combine in a large bowl. Mash lightly to crush the peas and break up the bacon. Stir in the mascarpone, Parmesan, 1 egg and the mint, then season with black pepper.
3 Roll out the pastry on a lightly floured surface to the thickness of a 20p coin. Cut circles out using an 12cm cutter. Spoon the filling into the centre of each. Brush the edges with beaten egg and pinch the pastry together on one side to seal. Brush the tops with a little more egg wash and sprinkle each with Parmesan. Place the pasties on 2 floured baking sheets. Bake for 25 mins. Leave to cool, then chill until ready to serve.

PER PASTY (12) 243 kcals, protein 8g, carbs 13g, fat 17g, sat fat 9g, fibre none, sugar none, salt 0.8g

Lemon & herb lamb lollipops

SERVES 8-10 ● PREP 25 MINS ● COOK 30 MINS A little effort ❄ UNCOOKED

2 x 8-bone rack lamb cutlets, French trimmed (ask your butcher to do this)
2 tbsp plain flour
1 egg
3 tbsp milk
100g fresh breadcrumbs
Small bunch of parsley, finely chopped
Zest of 2 lemons
Vegetable oil, for frying

1 Slice the lamb cutlets between the bones to give you 16 pieces. Remove any big pieces of fat. Cover the cutlets with cling film and lightly bash the meat with a rolling pin to flatten slightly. Put the cutlets in a bowl and sprinkle with flour and some seasoning, tossing to coat.
2 Whisk the egg and milk in a shallow bowl. Place the breadcrumbs, parsley and lemon zest in another. Heat the oven to 200C/180C fan. Heat enough oil in a large frying pan to come 0.5cm up the side.
3 Dip each lamb cutlet into the egg mixture, then into the breadcrumbs, pressing gently to help crumbs stick. Cook each cutlet in the hot oil for 2 mins each side until golden brown – you will need to do this in batches. Drain on a plate lined with kitchen paper. When all cutlets have been fried, place on a baking tray and cook in the oven for 3 mins more. This will ensure that any parts of the bone that did not touch the pan have been cooked. Leave to cool, then chill if making ahead or pack into containers for your picnic.

PER SERVING (10) 332 kcals, protein 35g, carbs 10g, fat 17g, sat fat 8g, fibre none, sugar 1g, salt 0.5g

MAKE IT GLUTEN FREE
Use gluten-free flour and gluten-free breadcrumbs or polenta.





Asparagus & courgette fritters with fresh tomato & ginger chutney

MAKES 16 ● PREP 15 MINS ● COOK 30 MINS Easy

Vegetable oil, for frying
250g fine asparagus, cut into 3cm pieces
2 large courgettes, cut into matchsticks
140g plain flour
1 tsp baking powder
1 tsp paprika
1 tsp chilli flakes
1 large egg
100ml sparkling water
FOR THE CHUTNEY
50ml white wine vinegar
2 tbsp golden caster sugar
Thumb-sized piece of ginger, finely chopped
4 large ripe tomatoes, finely chopped

1 Heat enough oil to come 2.5cm up the side of a large, deep frying pan. Put the asparagus and courgettes in a large bowl. Whisk the remaining ingredients together to make a batter. Pour it over the vegetables with some seasoning, then mix.
2 Use a large spoon to drop bhaji-sized spoonfuls of the mixture into the hot oil – you'll have to do this in batches. Cook for 3 mins, until golden brown, then flip over and cook for another 2 mins. Drain on kitchen paper. Leave to cool before packing into containers.
3 To make the chutney, pour the vinegar and sugar into a saucepan and put over a medium heat to dissolve the sugar. Add the ginger and tomatoes, then turn up the heat and boil for 10 mins until thickened. Cool completely before storing in a tub.

PER FRITTER 100 kcals, protein 2g, carbs 11g, fat 5g, sat fat 1g, fibre 1g, sugar 4g, salt 0.1g



Apple, elderflower & gin cocktails

SERVES 8 ● PREP 5 MINS ● NO COOK Easy

In a jam jar, mix **250ml gin** with **200ml elderflower cordial**. When ready to serve, divide the mixture between 8 glasses, top up with **1 litre cloudy apple juice**, **apple slices** and **ice**.

PER SERVING 208 kcals, protein none, carbs 31g, fat none, sat fat none, fibre none, sugar 31g, salt none >>

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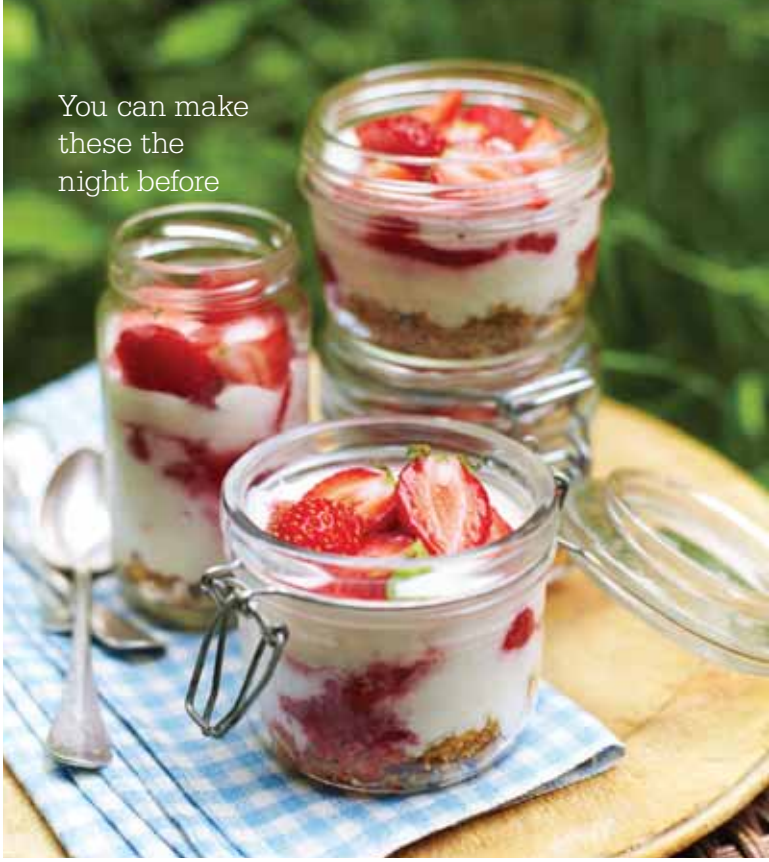
Apricot shortbread

CUTS INTO 16 SQUARES ● PREP 15 MINS ● COOK 30 MINS Easy

200g dried apricots, finely chopped
4 tbsp apricot conserve
250g pack butter, chopped
100g golden caster sugar, plus extra for sprinkling
1 tsp vanilla extract
250g plain flour
140g ground rice

1 Heat oven to 180C/160C fan and grease and line a 20cm square shallow cake tin with baking parchment. Put the apricots and conserve in a small pan with 4 tbsp water, simmer over a medium heat until thick, then mash the apricots a little with a fork and set aside to cool.
2 Tip the butter, sugar and vanilla into a large bowl, and beat with an electric whisk until pale and fluffy. Add the flour and ground rice, using a wooden spoon and then your hands to bring the mixture together as a dough. Divide into 2 pieces.
3 Use your fingers to spread 1 piece of shortbread dough over the bottom of the tin. Spread the apricots over the top, leaving a small border around the edge. Roll out the remaining dough to a 20cm square and place on top of the apricot filling. Use your finger to make an indent all around the edges of the shortbread, then prick the top all over with a fork. Bake for 25-30 mins until the edges are just starting to turn golden. Leave to cool in the tin, then sprinkle with caster sugar and cut into 16 squares.

PER SQUARE 260 kcals, protein 3g, carbs 32g, fat 13g, sat fat 8g, fibre 2g, sugar 14g, salt 0.3g



Strawberries & cream cheesecake jars

MAKES 8 ● PREP 20 MINS ● NO COOK

Easy Vit C

This dessert is sure to impress your friends.

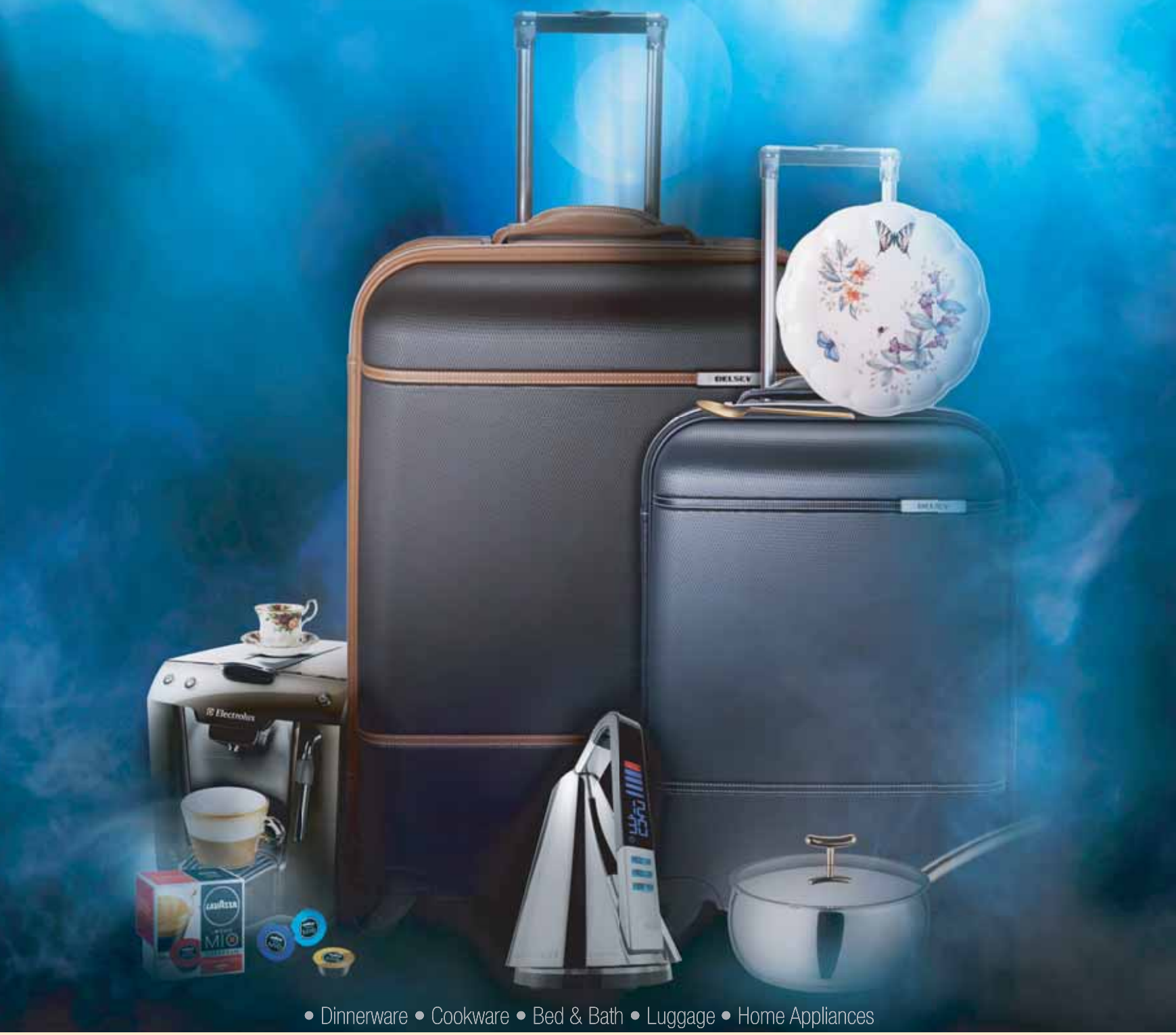
200g buttery biscuits
200g cream cheese
200ml double cream
6 tbsp icing sugar
2 tsp vanilla extract
500g strawberries, halved or quartered
YOU WILL NEED
8 jars with lids

1 Blitz the biscuits to crumbs in a food processor or in a bowl with the end of a rolling pin. Divide the biscuit crumbs between the jars.
2 In a large bowl, whisk the cream cheese, cream, 5 tbsp icing sugar and the vanilla extract until softly whipped. Tip half the strawberries and the remaining sugar into another bowl and crush with a fork to a purée. Ripple the purée through the cream and divide between the jars. Top each cheesecake with remaining strawberries, secure the lids and chill until ready to pack up. Transport in a cooler bag.

PER JAR 413 kcals, protein 3g, carbs 33g, fat 30g, sat fat 18g, fibre 1g, sugar 23g, salt 0.5g GF

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The festive outdoors

Dubai Festival City offers a range of alfresco dining options where you can enjoy good food and soak up the sunshine.



FAMILY PICNIC

One of the most unique brunch options in the city, there's really no better way to spend a Saturday afternoon than on the lush lawns overlooking the Al Badia golf course, while tucking into a picnic basket packed with delicious goodies. The hamper not only includes fresh sandwiches and other treats like sausage rolls, but there is also a barbecue grill serving up freshly grilled meats. Pudding is taken care of at Candyland, an outdoor dessert station offering cakes and other sweet treats, which will inevitably draw the children in as moths to a flame! But, they will have plenty of other things to entertain them, with special mini baskets for kids, and plenty of space to run around in.

The outdoor effect: Whether you choose to kick back on a comfy blanket, or sit at a table overlooking a waterfall, with acres of greenery, a good time is guaranteed for the whole family.

What's on the menu: The wicker hampers include picnic-perfect foods like fresh crab meat salad with lemon Mayonnaise and home-made scotch eggs with Piccalilli while at the barbecue grill, you can find delicacies like home-smoked, slow-cooked beef brisket served with English Mustard.

Every Saturday; Dhs265 per person with soft drinks, Dhs365 with selected house beverages.



GOURMET DINING

If the formal grandeur of Reflets par Pierre Gagnaire isn't your style, then the newly opened La Terrasse is just the thing. With seating just for 30 people, the exclusive outdoor terrace offers food in small plate-style that introduce the tastebuds to the world of Pierre Gagnaire's fine cuisine.

The outdoor effect: Overlooking Dubai's city skyline and sparkling waterfront views, La Terrasse offers Michelin star-standard food in a relaxed ambience.

What's on the menu: Expect light bites like Beaufort and Comté cheese terrine; Pissaladière of morels, Romaine salad, Manchego cheese; The 3 'Croque-Monsieur'.

Open every evening, prices start from AED 350 for four bites and a glass of bubbly.



LOUNGE AROUND

For a chilled-out evening of drinks, canapés and a view, you can't do much better than the new Skyline Lounge at the leisure deck of the Crowne Plaza Dubai Festival City. Enjoy creative cocktails and Mediterranean tapas platters, as well as shisha, with lounge tunes setting the backdrop.

The outdoor effect: Located on Level 5, balmy breezes accompany the stunning views of the historic Dubai Creek and the city skyline.

What's on the menu: Don't miss the Skyline Original cocktail, and the ever-changing chef's signature tapas dishes.



LAZY LUNCHING

At Zaytoun, authentic food from around the Mediterranean region is offered, from antipasti, and mezze and soups, to signature main courses and desserts.

The outdoor effect: Surrounded by landscaped greenery, and with the creek within viewing distance, the restaurant's sunny outdoor terrace is as Mediterranean a setting as it gets!

What's on the menu: Expect a range of pan-Mediterranean region dishes, from Greek style grilled chicken served with spinach, to Connolo, a pastry roll stuffed with ricotta cream cheese and crushed pistachio served with raspberry and vanilla sauce.

Available on Fridays and Saturdays, Dhs165 for food only, Dhs250, including select beverages.

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Med-inspired menu

Keep it relaxed the next time you're entertaining, with these sharing-style Mediterranean dishes from Izu Ani, head chef at La Serre Bistro & Boulangerie.

Photographs ANAS CHERUR



Nigeria-born, London-bred Izu Ani found his calling in the culinary field after studying home economics at school. His career got off to a great start when he joined Michelin-star restaurant The Square in London, after which he spent time working in France and Spain (often for free) to train himself. With all this experience in hand, he returned to London to re-launch Vanilla restaurant, and then moved to Dubai to launch the award-winning La Petite Maison in 2010. In 2012, Izu got the opportunity to create his dream restaurant as head chef of La Serre Bistro and Boulangerie, which has recently opened to wide acclaim. Here he shares some signature recipes from the menu, in which he combines elements from the French and Mediterranean dining culture, exclusively with us.

Mountain tomato, goat's cheese and hazelnut salad

SERVES 4 ● PREP 15 MINS ● COOK 3 MINS

30g goat's cheese, sliced into 4 thick rounds
White balsamic dressing (1 part white balsamic, 2 parts olive oil)
1 large Lebanese mountain tomato, sliced into 4 thick slices lengthways
1 red chilli, sliced into 4 pcs
Rock salt, to season
FOR THE HAZELNUT CRUST
10g hazelnuts
5g sesame seeds
5g coriander seeds
5g cumin seeds

1 To prepare the hazelnut crust, roast the hazelnuts, sesame seeds, coriander seeds, and cumin seeds separately in a saucepan over a high heat. Roast each one for roughly 2 mins, shaking the pan to ensure the seeds and nuts do not stick or burn.

2 Transfer the hazelnuts to a pestle and mortar and grind to very small pieces. Transfer to a bowl and add the sesame, coriander and cumin seeds and combine thoroughly.

3 Line the four goat's cheese slices on a baking tray, drizzle each one generously with white balsamic dressing and sprinkle a handful of the hazelnut crust mixture on top of each slice. Put the tray under a hot grill for 1 min to warm the cheese and make the crust slightly golden.

4 Place the mountain tomato on a plate, sprinkle with rock salt and drizzle with white balsamic dressing.

5 Remove the tray from the grill and place each piece of goat's cheese carefully on top of the slice of tomato. Place a slice of red chilli on top of each piece to garnish and serve immediately.



Text and styling NICOLA MONTEATH



Marinated lamb cutlets with spices

SERVES 4 ● PREP 20 MINS, PLUS 6 HRS FOR MARINATING ● COOK 10 MINS

8 racks (750-800g in total) lamb cutlets
FOR THE MARINADE
A pinch of cumin seeds
1 clove of garlic, thinly sliced
A large sprig of rosemary, picked
80ml clear honey
100g Korean spice paste (available at Asian grocery stores)
500ml olive oil
12ml apple cider vinegar

1 Pre-heat the oven to 180C. Roast the cumin seeds in a small baking tray for 4 mins to release the aromas.
2 Shallow-fry the garlic in a frying pan until slightly golden. Remove from the heat and drain thoroughly ensuring garlic is dry.
3 Shallow-fry the picked rosemary in a frying pan. Remove from heat and drain thoroughly ensuring rosemary is dry and crispy.
4 Blitz all the marinade ingredients together in a blender.
5 Place the lamb cutlets onto a baking tray. Brush the lamb with the marinade using a pastry brush until it is thickly coated all over. Refrigerate for 6 hrs. Remove lamb from the fridge and allow the meat to come to room temperature. Place the tray of lamb under a hot grill for approximately 2-3 mins on each side to achieve a medium doneness with a pink centre. Remove from the oven and allow the meat to rest for 3 mins. Then put back into the oven to heat it nicely for 1 min before serving with ratatouille (recipe on next page) on the side. >>

Ratatouille



SERVES 4
- PREP 30 MINS
- COOK 30 MINS

2 white onions
2 courgettes
2 aubergines, chopped
2 red peppers
2 yellow peppers
70ml olive oil
A pinch of basil
A pinch of chives
FOR THE TOMATO BASE
300g white onions, chopped
70ml olive oil
40g caster sugar (adjust, depending on the sweetness of the tomatoes)
450g tomatoes, at room temperature
Salt and sugar to season
FOR THE CHERRY TOMATO SAUCE
1 clove of garlic, finely chopped
15ml olive oil
350g cherry tomatoes
2 pinches salt
1 tsp sugar
Paprika, to season

1 Prepare the tomato base by sautéing the onions in a frying pan with a little olive oil. Add the sugar and caramelise. Blanch the tomatoes in boiling hot water for 10 secs then remove and place in iced water to stop the cooking process. Peel the skins off and dice evenly.
2 Add diced tomatoes to the frying pan, stirring constantly until thoroughly combined. Reduce by half, season with salt and sugar to taste, then take off the heat and set aside.
3 Prepare the cherry tomato sauce by sautéing the garlic in a frying pan with olive oil. Quarter the cherry tomatoes and add to the frying pan. Cook over a medium high heat. Add the salt and cook for 3 mins, stirring constantly. Reduce heat and simmer for 6 mins. Add the sugar and paprika and set aside.
4 Soak the white onions in a bowl of room temperature water for half an hour, then transfer to a baking tray and put into the oven for 25 mins at 210C. Remove from oven, peel the skin off and cut into large pieces.
5 Season the aubergines with salt and set aside. Chop the courgettes, red peppers and yellow peppers into large chunks, salt all the vegetables and put all the vegetables except the aubergines onto a baking tray. Drizzle with olive oil and put into the oven at 160C for 20 mins, turning half way through.
6 Pat the aubergine pieces with a kitchen towel, then deep-fry at 160C in a deep fryer, until it turns a golden-brown colour (about 6 mins). Transfer to a plate with a kitchen paper to remove the excess oil.
7 Remove the vegetables from the oven and leave to cool for 20 mins. Combine the vegetables, tomato base, and cherry tomato sauce in a large mixing bowl, adding the aubergine last so it does not become soggy. Sprinkle with basil and chives and heat mixture in a saucepan for 3-4 mins, stirring gently from time to time. Serve warm with the lamb.



"For me, there is nothing better than sharing a meal with good friends and family. Quality food, served simply and shared, that's what we're about."

– Izu Ani

Lemon tart

SERVES 4 ● PREP 20 MINS
● COOK 45 MINS

5 eggs
135ml lemon juice
150g caster sugar
150ml double cream
Zest of half a lemon
Zest of half a lime
For the pastry base
156g butter
140g icing sugar
380g plain flour
6 egg yolks

1 Make the pastry by mixing the butter, sugar and flour together. Once combined, add the eggs and mix together. Cover the bowl with cling film and leave for 1 hr in the fridge. *Can be made a day ahead, and is in fact, better made 1 day before using.*
2 Remove from fridge and roll the pastry into a large circle. Transfer to a tart or pastry tray. Create weight by taking a large sheet of tin foil and pouring a large bag of rice onto the foil then sealing all of the rice inside, place this weight onto the pastry. Cook the pastry in the oven at 175C for 15 mins.
3 In a bowl, mix together the lemon juice, sugar and cream. Once combined, add the zest – by this stage it will reach a liquid consistency.
4 Remove the tray from the oven, remove the weight and using a pastry brush, coat the pastry with egg yolk. Put back into the oven for 5 mins to make it golden brown. Remove the pastry from the oven and pour the lemon mixture into the pastry.
5 Cook for 25 mins at 110C. Remove from oven and allow to cool for 10 mins, then refrigerate for a minimum of 1 hr before serving. GF



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Chef skills

Learn to:

Make honeycomb



This crunchy, chewy golden sweet treat is easier to make than you think! Manish Thakur, head pastry chef at Rivington Bar and Grill shows us how, and also shares a simple dessert recipe using honeycomb.

Photographs ANAS CHERUR

Manish Thakur is head pastry chef at Rivington Bar and Grill, Souk Madinat Jumeirah, and has previously worked at leading restaurants in the ITC group of hotels in New Delhi and Mumbai, as well as in the UK, including a stint at Michelin-starred restaurant Benares in London.

Text and coordination NICOLA MONTEATH

Honeycomb ice cream with chocolate sauce

SERVES 6-8 ● PREP 35 MINS ● COOK 15-16 MINS

1l vanilla ice cream
25g white chocolate
100g honeycomb
30ml chocolate sauce
FOR THE HONEYCOMB (MAKES ONE SLAB OF ABOUT 450G)
500g caster sugar
50g glucose syrup
10g bicarbonate of soda
30ml honey
FOR THE CHOCOLATE SAUCE (MAKES 1l)
500ml double cream
50ml milk
500g dark chocolate

1 Take out all the ice cream from the tub and let it soften a bit, but not melt.
2 Melt the white chocolate in the microwave and then spread it out on a sheet of grease proof paper. Place in the freezer.
3 Make the honeycomb by following the steps shown here. Prepare a greased surface, preferably a marble, granite top or silicon sheet. In a steel pan, put the caster sugar, honey and glucose syrup. Add a few drops of water to dampen the sugar.
4 Place the pan on the stove and boil until it starts to caramelise – it should be a light golden brown colour. Set aside to cool for half a minute.
5 Add the bicarbonate of soda very quickly and give it a quick but short whisk. Do not over-whisk or else you will lose all the air incorporated by bicarbonate of soda. Carefully empty the boiling sugar on to the greased surface. Let the mixture cool down and harden. Once cool, break with a spoon or cut with a knife. The honeycomb is now ready and can be stored in an airtight container for further use.
6 Continue the dessert by breaking the honeycomb into smaller pieces and folding into the softened ice cream.
7 Break the frozen white chocolate into pieces and add to the ice cream as well.
8 Mix and freeze for 3-4 hrs in a pre-chilled container.
9 Make the chocolate sauce by bringing the cream and milk to boil. Pour the boiling mix on to the dark chocolate and melt for 1 min. Whisk the chocolate to melt it completely – make sure there are no lumps. Pass through a strainer.
10 To serve, scoop the honeycomb ice cream, add a few pieces of extra honeycomb on top and pour warm dark chocolate sauce all over.



Pour all ingredients into a stainless steel pan, one at a time, and mix with a spoon until it becomes a little thick in texture. This will take 1-2 mins.



After it has been mixed and thickens a little, place the pan on the stove on medium heat. Use a candy thermometer to check the temperature – it should be 105C.



Add the bicarbonate of soda and with a brush, push down all the sugar crystals that have gathered around the pan into the boiling mix.



The mix will start to change colour at this point. Give it a quick whisk.



Pour the contents out onto a silicone sheet or marble surface to let it harden.



Once it has cooled down, break with a spoon and enjoy on its own or in a dessert. GF

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Orchard harvest

Enjoy trying these brand-new recipes using seasonal fruits. Recipes and food styling JANE HORNBY Photographs PHILIP WEBB



Squidgy pear & hazelnut chocolate spread cake, recipe p66

Styling LUIS PERAL

Squidgy pear & hazelnut chocolate spread cake

SERVES 8 ● PREP 15 MINS ● COOK 40 MINS Easy

The vital thing in this recipe is not to overcook the batter – as with a brownie, the squidgy middle is what it's all about.

400g hazelnut chocolate spread
50g unsalted butter, softened, plus a little to grease the tin
3 large eggs, at room temperature
140g self-raising flour
25g cocoa
2 ripe but not squishy pears, peeled, quartered and cored (pears with a rounder shape work well)
2 tbsp apricot jam, warmed and passed through a sieve
50g whole blanched hazelnuts
Double cream, to serve

1 Heat oven to 160C/140C fan. Butter then line a round 23cm springform baking tin. Put the chocolate spread in a large bowl and add the butter, eggs and a pinch of salt. Whisk for 1 min with electric beaters until the mixture is smooth and slightly bubbly.
2 Sift in the flour and cocoa, then fold in with a spatula until smooth. Scrape into the tin and level the top. Peel, quarter and core the pears. Cut 4 slits through the fat part of each quarter, then press lightly to make a fanned shape. Use a pastry brush to glaze the pears with apricot jam, then lift onto the cake in a clock-face pattern. Don't press the pears into the mix.
3 Scatter with the nuts and bake for 40 mins until risen with a thin crust. The cake will have a very slight wobble when it's ready, and a skewer inserted into the middle will come out coated with soft cake batter. Brush another thin layer of the jam over the pears (this stops the fruit from turning brown). Cool in the tin and serve warm or cold, with double cream.

PER SERVING 474 kcals, protein 9g, carbs 47g, fat 28g, sat fat 10g, fibre 5g, sugar 34g, salt 0.4g



Baked apple & toffee crumble

SERVES 6 ● PREP 20 MINS PLUS RESTING ● COOK 1 HR Easy

This crumble, with its traditional circles of apple, buttery brown sugar, plump fruit and spice, but baked under a nutty oat topping instead, has got Friday lunch written all over it.

FOR THE APPLE LAYER
100g raisins
100g pitted soft dates, snipped into small pieces with scissors
85g light muscovado sugar
3 tbsp dark rum (or use orange juice)
25g unsalted butter
1 tsp mixed spice
Zest and juice of 1 lemon
4 Bramley apples, about 800g, peeled, cored and cut into 1cm rings
FOR THE CRUMBLE
125g plain flour
100g unsalted butter
50g light muscovado sugar
3 tbsp jumbo oats
25g flaked almonds (or use any other nuts you like)
Custard or ice cream, to serve

1 Heat oven to 190C/170C fan. Put everything for the apple layer, except the lemon juice and apples, into a bowl and microwave on High for 1½ mins until the butter has melted and the sugar is syrupy. Toss in the apples and lemon juice, then spoon into a medium baking dish, making sure the dried fruit is evenly distributed.
2 Rub the flour and butter together, first into fine crumbs, then keep going until the mix forms bigger clumps, a bit like a rough biscuit dough. Stir in the sugar, oats and almonds. Scatter over the fruit, then cover with foil and bake for 1 hr, removing the foil for the final 30 mins, until golden and bubbling. Rest for 10 mins, then serve with custard or ice cream.

PER SERVING 485 kcals, protein 5g, carbs 67g, fat 20g, sat fat 11g, fibre 5g, sugar 50g, salt 0.1g GF



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The London Dairy dessert series

#11 Gooey goodness

Burton George, executive pastry chef at The St. Regis Abu Dhabi, creates a warm and indulgent chocolate dessert, to enjoy with crispy chocolate espresso ice cream this winter.



Chocolate fondant with mixed berries

SERVES 4

50g dark chocolate
50g butter
1 whole egg
1 egg yolk
25g sugar
10g flour
Chocolate swirl, for garnish
1 small shiso cress leave, for garnish
FOR THE VANILLA SAUCE
150ml milk
74ml cream
30g sugar
½ vanilla bean from a vanilla pod
1 tsp corn starch
2 egg yolks

1 Bring the milk, cream, sugar and vanilla bean to boil in a pot.
2 Mix the corn starch and egg yolks together. Whisk the egg yolk mix into the boiling mix till it thickens. Remove from heat and set aside to cool.
3 Melt the dark chocolate and butter in the microwave for 30-40 secs, until the butter melts and has a silky texture. Set aside.
4 To make the fondant, beat the whole egg, yolk and sugar together until it becomes fluffy in texture. Fold in the melted chocolate mix and then slowly fold in the flour.
5 Place the mix into the moulds or ramekins and refrigerate for 20-25 minutes to set.
6 Bake in a preheated oven at 180C for 8 mins.
7 Carefully remove the chocolate cake from the mould and place on a plate. Add an ice cream scoop on top, drizzle vanilla sauce all over and decorate with mixed berries. Place a chocolate piece and shiso cress as garnish and serve.

Next month,
look out for the recipe with
Chocolate brownie delight

MEET THE CHEF



Sri Lankan native Burton George's journey in food began after he completed his degree in culinary arts at Wesley College in Colombo. Burton launched his career in Sri Lanka itself and then moved on to work in Bahrain, Bermuda, and Jamaica, as well as Dubai, before joining The St. Regis Abu Dhabi as executive pastry chef. Burton loves anything to do with chocolate and takes pride in his dessert painting skills.

CHEF'S TIP:

"Beat the eggs and sugar as well as you can – the more airy and fluffy the mix is, the lighter and softer the fondant will be."



To see a step-by-step video for this recipe, visit youtube.com/bbcgoodfoodme or facebook.com/LondonDairy, or you could simply scan the QR code with your smartphone.

St. Regis Abu Dhabi

Two other ways to enjoy London Dairy's Crispy Chocolate Espresso ice cream:

1



Serve a scoop on digestive biscuit, with mixed berries, and drizzled raspberry coulis all over.

2



Eat with toasted marshmallows and melted chocolate.

LONDON DAIRY

CRISPY CHOCOLATE ESPRESSO ICE CREAM

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- **PIERCHIC,** *Madinat Jumeirah*
- **SAYAD,** *Emirates Palace Abu Dhabi*
- **SEAFOOD MARKET,** *Le Meridien Dubai*
- **TURQUOIZ,** *St Regis Saadiyat Island*

BEST EXPERIENTIAL DINING

- **THE ACT DUBAI,** *Shangri-la Dubai*
- **BATEAUX DUBAI,** *Dubai Creek*
- **BLUE FLAME COOKING CLASSES,** *Jumeirah Creekside Hotel*
- **DINE IN THE DARK,** *Fairmont Dubai*
- **DINING BY DESIGN,** *Anantara Resorts*
- **JAZZ** *at Pizza Express, JLT*
- **MUSICHALL,** *Jumeirah Zabeel Saray*
- **PICNIC BRUNCH,** *Al Badia Golf InterContinental Dubai Festival City*
- **SUPPERCLUB DUBAI,** *Jumeirah Zabeel Saray*
- **VILLA ROMANA ST TROPEZ, DUBAI** *Habtoor Grand Resort & Spa*

RESTAURANTS - CASUAL DINING

BEST INTERNATIONAL

- **API CAE GOURMET,** *Abu Dhabi*
- **CARAMEL RESTAURANT AND LOUNGE,** *DIFC*
- **CHILI'S,** *UAE*
- **CLAW BBQ CRABSHACK & GRILL,** *Souk Al Bahar*
- **JAMIE'S ITALIAN,** *Dubai Festival City*
- **LAFAYETTE GOURMET,** *The Dubai Mall*
- **TEXAS ROADHOUSE,** *The Dubai Mall*
- **THE CHEESECAKE FACTORY,** *Dubai*
- **THE FARM,** *Al Barari*
- **TRIBES,** *Mall of Emirates*

BEST ASIAN

- **CHIMES RESTAURANT,** *Al Barsha*
- **JAPENGO,** *Dubai*
- **LEMONGRASS,** *UAE*
- **MAX'S RESTAURANT,** *Dubai*
- **NOODLE HOUSE,** *Jumeirah Emirates Towers*
- **PF CHANGS,** *Dubai*
- **PING PONG,** *The Dubai Mall*
- **SIZZLING WOK,** *Citymax Hotel Bur Dubai*
- **SMILING BKK,** *Jumeirah*
- **WAGAMAMA,** *Dubai*

BEST INDIAN

- **BARBEQUE DELIGHTS,** *JBR & Emaar Boulevard*
- **CALICUT PARAGON,** *Al Nahda*
- **CLAYPOT,** *Citymax Hotel Bur Dubai*
- **GAZEBO,** *Dubai*
- **GOVINDAS,** *Karama*
- **INDIA PALACE,** *Jumeirah Beach Residence*
- **PEPPERMILL,** *Abu Dhabi*
- **RAVI'S,** *Dubai*
- **THE BOMBAY,** *Marcopolo Hotel*
- **ZAFRAN,** *UAE*

BEST MIDDLE EASTERN

- **AL HALLAB,** *Dubai*
- **ARZ LEBANON,** *UAE*
- **BURJ AL HAMAM,** *Dubai*
- **KHAN MURJAN,** *Wafi*
- **LEBANESE FLOWER,** *Abu Dhabi*
- **LEILA RESTAURANTS,** *UAE*
- **MEZZA HOUSE,** *Emaar Boulevard*
- **REEM AL BAWADI,** *Dubai*
- **ZAATAR W ZEIT,** *UAE*
- **ZAROOB RESTAURANT & CAFÉ LOUNGE,** *Dubai*

BEST CAFÉ

- **1762 GOURMET DELI,** *Dubai*
- **BOOKMUNCH CAFE,** *Al Wasl Square, Jumeirah*
- **CAFE BATEEL,** *UAE*
- **DOME CAFÉ,** *UAE*
- **JONES THE GROCER,** *UAE*
- **MORE CAFÉ,** *Dubai*
- **PAUL BAKERY & CAFÉ,** *UAE*
- **STARBUCKS,** *UAE*
- **THE LIME TREE CAFE AND KITCHEN,** *Dubai*
- **THE ONE KHALIDIYA THEATRE & RESTAURANT,** *Abu Dhabi*

HOME COOKING - INGREDIENTS

FAVOURITE SUPERMARKET

- **AL MAYA**
- **CARREFOUR**
- **CHOITHRAMS**
- **GEANT**
- **LULU HYPERMARKET**
- **ORGANIC FOODS & CAFE**
- **PARK N SHOP**
- **SPINNEYS**
- **UNION COOP**
- **WAITROSE**

FAVOURITE SPECIALTY FOOD STORE

- **AL ADIL**
- **BE SUPER NATURAL**
- **CHEZ CHARLES**
- **DOWN TO EARTH ORGANIC**
- **GLUTENFREE-SUPERMARKET.AE**
- **JONES THE GROCER**
- **LAFAYETTE GOURMET**
- **MARKET & PLATTERS**
- **MARKS & SPENCERS**
- **RIPE MARKET**

FAVOURITE STORE CUPBOARD PRODUCT BRAND

- **AMERICAN GARDEN**
- **CALIFORNIA GARDEN**
- **GYMA SPICES**
- **HEINZ**
- **KNORR**
- **MAGGI**
- **NESTLÉ**
- **SACLA**
- **SCHWARTZ**
- **SUNFOODS**

FAVOURITE DAIRY BRAND

- **AL AIN**
- **AL MARAI**
- **AL RAWABI**
- **ELLE & VIRE**
- **KERRYGOLD**
- **KRAFT**
- **LACNOR**
- **LONDON DAIRY**
- **LURPAK**
- **MARMUM**

FAVOURITE TEA BRAND

- **AHMAD TEA**
- **ALOKOZAY**
- **BROOKE BOND**
- **DILMAH**
- **LIPTON**
- **MARIAGE FRERES**
- **PG TIPS**
- **TETLEY**
- **TWININGS**
- **TWG**

FAVOURITE COFFEE BRAND

- **COFFEE PLANET**
- **COSTA COFFEE**
- **DAVIDOFF**
- **ILLY**
- **LAVAZZA**
- **NESCAFE**
- **NESPRESSO**
- **CONTINENTAL**
- **STARBUCKS**
- **TCHIBO**

FAVOURITE JUICE BRAND

- **AL AIN**
- **BARAKAT**
- **BERRY WHITE**
- **CERES**
- **DEL MONTE**
- **FLORIDA'S NATURAL**
- **LACNOR**
- **MASAFI**
- **TROPICANA**
- **WAITROSE**

FAVOURITE OLIVE OIL BRAND

- **BERTOLLI**
- **BORGES**
- **CRESCENDO - VOM FASS**
- **FIGARO**
- **JONES THE GROCER**
- **LA TOURANGELLE**
- **RAFAEL SALGADO**
- **RAHMA**
- **JAMIE OLIVER**
- **WAITROSE**

HOME COOKING - ACCESSORIES

FAVOURITE LARGE KITCHEN APPLIANCE BRAND

- **BOSCH**
- **HACKER**
- **HITACHI**
- **LG**
- **MIELE**
- **PHILIPS**
- **SAMSUNG**
- **SIEMENS**
- **TEKA**
- **TOSHIBA**

FAVOURITE SMALL KITCHEN APPLIANCE BRAND

- **BOSCH**
- **BRAUN**
- **CUISINART**
- **DE'LONGHI**
- **KENWOOD**
- **KITCHEN AID**
- **LAKELAND**
- **MOULINEX**
- **PANASONIC**
- **PHILIPS**

FAVOURITE TABLEWARE STORE

- **@HOME**
- **BLOOMINGDALES**
- **CRATE AND BARREL**
- **HOME CENTRE**
- **HOMES R US**
- **IKEA**
- **JASHANMAL**
- **LAKELAND**
- **TAVOLA**
- **VILLEROY & BOCH**

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3's a trend:

ENTERTAINMENT DINING VENUES

We take a look at some of the most interesting foodie trends in town.

There's no dearth of good restaurants here in Dubai, but the well-heeled populace are always on the hunt for something more. And they seem to be increasingly well catered for, with a sudden explosion of world class outlets that offer superlative entertainment alongside a fine dining experience. Or, in fact, gourmet fare to accompany the entertainment – we're not sure which comes first! Bringing the late 1800s-style variety show concept into the 21st century, these venues are glamorous, sophisticated, and always good fun! We check out three that are making waves for all the right reasons, to see what all the fuss is about.

Music Hall, Jumeirah Zabeel Saray Dubai



When a nightspot is founded by someone who also happened to create his own non-physical nation (Michel Elefteriades, founder of Nowheristan – google it!) you know it's going to be something special. Thankfully, no political overtones are felt at Music Hall, an acclaimed Beirut-born venue that opened its doors in Dubai in early 2013. Instead, what you get is a series of short musical acts of a diverse variety – from Arabic musicians to Abba tribute bands and everything in between – in one night. The vast tiered ballroom is transformed into a magical venue with plush red sofas and well-stocked tables, a space throbbing with the sense of exciting things to come. The music begins at around 10pm, with short two-three song sets from each artist (there's no messing about, and each performer dives straight into their act) and DJ spells in between. Each night sees different acts – with the one thing in common being the talent and high standards. The menu is as international as the entertainment. The sharing platters of mini bites is a great way to start, with everything from Thai fish cakes on lemongrass skewers (delicious!) and chicken satay, to arancini balls on offer. While most people probably don't sit down to a proper three-course dinner, with the dancing around the table commencing as the night progresses, if you wanted to, mains on offer include steak, seafood options and mini burgers (which seemed a popular choice). The dessert menu is where culinary creativity takes over – think sweet minestrone and tiramisu with pistachio macarons. The food, while good, isn't what would keep you coming back here however – it is that paradoxical mix of an experience that is fun yet classy, sophisticated yet relaxed, expensive yet totally-worth-it, that will. *Dhs450 minimum spend per person, open Thursdays and Fridays. Visit themusichall.com or call 056-2708670.*



Villa Romana St Tropez Dubai, Habtoor Grand Resort & Spa

Frequented by A-listers, the original St Tropez location is recreated in true Dubai-style at this beachside venue, even if the racy entertainment has been turned down a notch or two! Two life-sized lion statues guarding the entrance set the tone for the Renaissance-style interiors which provide a sumptuous, if slightly over-the-top setting, for the Mediterranean French-Italian cuisine – inspired by the brand's home – on offer. The table settings that include colorful Indian linens, and masks and hats, hint at the interactive entertainment on offer – which includes fashion shows and dance acts. Top notch DJs belt out hits, to which the crowd and the wait staff alike can be found dancing to. With a strong fashion focus, there is an on-site boutique stocking glam Villa Romana beachwear and accessories, and incidents of customers buying clothes off a model's back during a show isn't unheard of. Connections to the original Villa Romana continue in the menu, with the kitchen headed by an Italian chef serving up wood-fired oven pizzas and delicious pastas, as well as traditional French dishes like bouillabaisse and foie gras terrine. One of the only such restaurants that is good as a daytime venue as well as a nightspot, this is the perfect place for a bit of showy hedonism from Dubai's glam set. *Open everyday, special offers such as business lunches and ladies nights are available. Call 04-3995000.*



The Act Dubai, Shangri-La Hotel Dubai

The Act has already acquired a reputation – not just for its envelope-pushing entertainment, but also for its excellent food (it's the first Peruvian specialty restaurant of the city). An innocuous looking door on the 33rd floor of this hotel takes you, rabbit-hole-style, into an opulent, dimly lit boudoir of velvet drapes, chandeliers and Victorian chairs. The extravagance continues into the entertainment, which is a quirky, unpredictable mix of musicians, comedians, knife throwers – you name it! – who perform in an interactive style in the intimate venue. With the two main performances scheduled at 9:45pm and 1:45am respectively, the live acts are punctuated by the DJ. Competing for attention is the food, with which chef Roberto Segura does an excellent job of introducing the city to Peru's rich culinary heritage. Start with some delicious cocktails, to wash down traditional starters like ceviche (don't miss the salmon ceviche with coconut and mango), and Tiraditos (Peruvian sashimi). Other delicacies include a range of fried enchiladas and sharing-style platters which include crispy quinoa prawn and beautifully tender beef skewers. You'd be missing out if you didn't try some of the mains like the grilled octopus, and the traditional Peruvian chicken casserole. And, for dessert, try the tres leches casero, a Latin American specialty. Never mind the entertainment, the food in itself makes this worth a visit – and of course the bragging rights at this exclusive, see-and-be-seen place.
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Text SUDESHNA GHOSH | Photographs SUPPLIED

Flying high

Celebrity chef Vineet Bhatia talks to Nicola Monteath about planes, partnerships and palates.



His height may have been a disadvantage earlier on in life – he is a rather short man at 5'4" – but Vineet Bhatia, the renowned Indian celebrity chef, restaurateur and holder of multiple Michelin stars definitely hasn't pulled the short straw when it comes to finding success. London-based Vineet comes from a middle class family, was born and bred in Mumbai and interestingly, has always had a strong appetency for aviation. "I lived near the airport in Juhu, Mumbai, and had an affair with aircrafts. The sound of planes taking off would wake me up every morning and ever since I was a child, I knew I wanted to somehow get into the field," he says. "I passed all the air force tests, but my height was a major problem. I was offered navy but didn't want to get into it."

Due to his height dilemma, Vineet was redirected towards another industry. Little did he know it would one day work out in his favour. "I decided to get into hotel management as I wanted to make cocktails at the bar, but again my height proved to be a problem," he says.

Vineet isn't ashamed to admit that back then, he thought of the kitchen as a place for people who weren't sure what they wanted to do with their life. But once he got into it, he was amazed. He enrolled in a hospitality management university in Mumbai, and was one of 14 students recruited from campus by The Oberoi Delhi at the end of his course. "I was one of the lucky ones," he says.

Celebrating Indian cuisine

Throughout his time at the hotel, Vineet stuck to his roots and focused on traditional Indian cuisine as he wanted to perfect it, even though most of his colleagues were fascinated by French cuisine. This focus landed him the position of Chef de cuisine at specialty Indian restaurants, Mewar and Kandahar at The Oberoi Mumbai. However, in spite of doing well, he felt a lack of growth opportunities, and in 1993, Vineet moved to England to join Star of India, an Indian restaurant in South Kensington – where most of the chefs were Bangladeshi! "I left with just seven pounds in my pocket, a few books and clothes. I was the only Indian at the restaurant and it took me over six months to revamp the menu," he says.

His involvement in the restaurant wasn't welcomed by diners at first. They were used to eating curries with oil floating on top, while sipping beer. "I recall an incident when an old English gentleman approached me and told me that the carrot halwa I made was not how it's supposed to be cooked – it was hot and sweet.

Photographs ANAS CHERUR

They didn't like the Rogan josh (lamb curry) either and wondered why the meat was still on the bone," he says. "I soon realised I needed to reinvent the classics in some way and so gave them a modern name instead. So, Rogan josh was now called slow cooked lamb shank with Kashmiri spices, while carrot halwa was warm carrot fudge – people loved it!"

Vineet was eager to position Indian food on the culinary map, rather than it being perceived as just a third world country's spicy cuisine, and this ambition paid off. After pushing the boundaries and getting the Brits to taste authentic Indian food – 'the real stuff' as Vineet describes it – word spread and the restaurant slowly became popular with the media too.

After five years, he decided to launch his own venture, Cinnamon Club, with a partner – but it didn't work out as planned and it shut down in just a few months. Not to be deterred, the same year, Vineet opened Zaika in Chelsea with a different partner. The restaurant was awarded a Michelin star in 2001, only a year and a half after opening, making Vineet one of the first Indian chefs to receive the accolade. "Receiving a star was amazing. It's like getting an Oscar!" he says.

The restaurant, although successful, didn't work out for Vineet and soon he realised that partnerships and him weren't a recipe for success – he found himself being cheated repeatedly. Keeping in mind his misfortunes from the past, Vineet decided to enter a partnership with his partner in the true sense of the word – his wife Rashima. Together, they opened Rasoi in 2004. "We took over a dainty Chelsea townhouse with funds raised from mortgaging our house. The place is quite unique – like a real house, and has bedrooms, staff quarters on-site and a private dining restaurant," he explains. Once the venue was chosen, it all came down to the brand name and we see Vineet's sense of humour come into play as he describes his thought process behind it. "We first wanted to name it Vinass – pronounced Vin-yaa's, to indicate it belongs to Vineet – but knew it would be pronounced Vin-ass, so we chose Rasoi instead, a Hindi word which can mean cooking or also kitchen."

At Rasoi, Vineet got to experiment and serve the food he wanted to. "We did a modern and contemporary menu and it was a win-win situation, as we served some dishes with a modern twist and names, as well as some of the good old classics people loved. We eventually realised this was our style," he says. Rasoi is still running and now serves as a training school for all the head chefs at Vineet's restaurants.

Spreading his wings

The fast pace of life in the kitchen undoubtedly kept him busy, but it wasn't long before destiny intervened to give him an opportunity to combine his two loves – aviation and food – when he was approached by British Airways in 2003 to overlook the in-flight catering on first and business class. "One of the dishes we served was coconut prawn chilli masala, a signature dish still served at all my restaurants," he tells me. This relationship lasted until he became associated with Qatar Airways as part of their Culinary World Menu world menu programme which launched in 2012.

By then, a lot of travellers were familiar with him and his restaurants, and Vineet found out one person even flew from Ahmedabad to Mumbai to dine at his restaurant. "Knowing that was amazing!" he smiles.

Not only was Vineet's food travelling around the world on airplanes, so were his restaurant concepts. Vineet's first venture outside London was in Mauritius in 2007, where he opened Rasoi by Vineet at One and Only Le Saint Geran, but it didn't stop there. Vineet soon expanded and opened a many as 11 restaurants in diverse locations around the world, from closer-home Leeds and Notting Hill to Moscow, Saudi Arabia, Doha, Mumbai and Geneva – which outlet received the second Michelin star he is credited with. Not only has he taken his Rasoi restaurant international, but has opened other concepts including Indego by Vineet, his popular restaurant at Grosvenor House Dubai. The menus vary across the restaurants and are more tailored to the local tastes, but Vineet retains his contemporary culinary style throughout. His mission has always been to keep the tradition of Indian food intact, while making it suitable for an international palate.

Apart from the high-profile collaborations, it was his TV show for Fox History & Traveller, 'Twist of Taste with Vineet Bhatia', which brought him recognition in India, "It was hilarious! My wife and I weren't aware it was already aired in India and so when we travelled back, we noticed everyone recognised me – from the guys in the customs at the airport to people on the streets," he says.

When Vineet decided to do the TV show, he made sure India was showcased right – no stereotyped poverty, slums and pictures of the Taj Mahal. "I had no interest in acting, so the show wasn't scripted. We developed a food-focused concept and it did extremely well," he says. On the show, Vineet and his wife travelled around India to different foodie cities such as Lucknow and Calicut, to name just a few. "We would stop at street stalls, try different foods and then take elements from each city and cook a meal at the end of the episode – on location. The idea was to allow viewers to recreate these low-effort dishes which now had a modern touch, so that they could try foods from other states, right at home," he says. Along the way he had a few unique experience too and speaks fondly of the states he explored. "The Pondicherry area is beautiful and so are the coffee, green pepper and vanilla plantations in Coorg. We used this produce in our dishes when we filmed there," he says.

Vineet's expansion into books and television wasn't a choice of his own though, the real mastermind is his wife. "I was bullied into it by Rashima," he jokes. "She made me realise it was important to write a cookbook and leave behind a legacy, that's how *Rasoi New Indian Kitchen* (Absolute Press) came about in 2010. The cookbook is my baby and I love all the recipes," he says.

> *"I soon realised I needed to reinvent the classics in some way and so gave them a modern name instead. People loved it!"*

Vineet may be well travelled and loves eating and trying cuisines all over the world, but claims Dubai's culinary scenes to be one of his favourites. "I love it! When I came in 2004 to check out the restaurant space at Grosvenor House, everyone told me not to go ahead with it. I actually wasn't too fond of this place back in 1992 when I first came here but it has changed a lot," he says. It's not just the fine dining scene he enjoys here. When Vineet isn't at his restaurant, he can be found at Indian eateries tucked away in Karama such as Calicut Paragon or Saravana Bhavan. A regular in the city, Vineet visits often, but residents might see him staying here for longer soon. "We might be filming a TV show in Dubai next year, but nothing is confirmed as yet. It will be either here or London," he says. Apart from this, Vineet also has a few restaurant openings lined up, one of which he tells us is in Riyadh.

We get him to share two signature recipes that best define his modern-meets-traditional style, served at his Dubai restaurant Indego by Vineet in Grosvenor House. >>

SIGNATURE RECIPES



Grilled red chilli-garlic prawns with black olive upma

SERVES 8 ● PREP 1HR 25MINS ● COOK30 MINS

16 prawns, medium size, shelled and de-veined
1 tbsp lemon juice
10 curry leaves, cut into juiliennes
1 ½ tbsp red chilli and garlic paste
Corn oil, to fry
Salt, to taste
Beetroot chutney, for serving
Sweetened yoghurt, for serving
Black olives, finely chopped, for serving
Baby leaves, for garnish
FOR THE GARLIC PASTE
2 heads garlic, cloves peeled and halved
125ml water
FOR THE RED CHILLI PASTE
8 red chillis
1 tsp vinegar
FOR THE BLACK OLIVE UPMA
3 tbsp ghee
1 tsp fresh ginger, chopped
1 tsp fresh green chilli, chopped
1 tbsp onion, chopped
6 tbsp fine semolina
225ml warm water
2 tbsp black olives, chopped

1 In a blender, purée the garlic with the water. The garlic paste can be refrigerated for up to 5 days. It may darken but it will still be good.
2 To make the red chilli paste, heat water in a pan, add vinegar and red chillis and cook for 15 mins. Cool and blend to paste.
3 In a bowl, mix together the prawns, lemon juice, curry leaves, chilli-garlic paste and salt. Rub them together and leave for 1 hr to marinate.
4 Heat up oil in non-stick pan, sear the prawns on both sides until done. Heat the ghee in a pan and add the ginger, green chillies and onions, sauté for 2 mins and add the semolina. Reduce the heat and roast the semolina for 4-5 mins, until its nutty aroma is released. Pour in the water, stirring constantly to prevent lumps. Cook over a low heat for 4 mins; the mixture should have the consistency of mashed potato. Finally add the black olives and salt.
5 To serve, brush some beetroot chutney on to the plate. Place a steel ring mould on the plate and spoon the olive upma in it, pack tightly and remove the ring mould. Arrange 2 prawns on the chutney and garnish with a few drops of sweetened yoghurt, black olives and baby leaves.

Blueberry phirni log and coconut kulfi

SERVES 12● PREP 7HRS15MINS ● COOK 40 MINS

1l full fat milk
100g basmati rice
100g blueberry puree
150g sugar
FOR THE BLUEBERRY COULIS
70g blueberry purée
25ml water
20g white granulated sugar
FOR THE COCONUT KULFI
600ml full-fat milk
300ml double cream
300ml coconut milk
60g white chocolate
30g white granulated sugar
60g desiccated coconut, roasted
90g whipping cream, whipped to soft peaks
Blueberries, for garnish
Dark chocolate sheets, for garnish
Gold leaves, for garish
Caramelised sugar strands, for garnish
Brown coconut, peeled, sliced and lightly roasted, for garnish

1 Wash rice, drain and pat dry. Blend to a coarse powder in a blender, to resemble semolina.
2 Boil milk, add rice and stir constantly to avoid lumps. Add water if necessary and cook until done. Reduce heat, add sugar and stir until it dissolves. Remove to cool, add the blueberry purée and stir to form a smooth mixture. Transfer the mixture to a log shaped mould and refrigerate.
3 To make the coulis, add all the ingredients to a heavy bottomed pan and cook on low heat till the sugar dissolves. Cook till the sauce thickens a bit, strain through a fine sieve and set aside to cool.
4 Pour the milk, coconut milk and double cream into a heavy-based pan, bring to the boil. Reduce the heat and simmer, stirring constantly to prevent sticking, until the mixture has reduced to a third of its original volume. Stir in the white chocolate, sugar and desiccated coconut. Leave to cool and then chill.
5 Fold in the whipped cream and pour into kulfi moulds (cone-shaped moulds). Freeze until firm.
6 Place the blueberry log on the plate and spoon dots of the blueberry coulis around. Place a dark chocolate sheet on the log and garnish with caramelised sugar strands, gold leaf and sprinkle a few blueberries on the plate. Place the coconut kulfi next to the phirni log and garnish with a roasted brown coconut slice. GF





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What's your beef?

Everything you need to know when shopping for, cooking or eating bovine meat.

THE WORD BEEF COMES FROM THE LATIN WORD BŎS WHICH MEANS COW. BEEF IS THE THIRD MOST POPULAR MEAT IN THE WORLD, AND ACCOUNTS FOR ABOUT 25 PER CENT OF GLOBAL MEAT PRODUCTION.



Text by NICOLA MONTEATH | Intro text from WIKEPEDIA | Photographs PHOTOS.COM



WHY GO ORGANIC?

According to Dima Sharif, brand ambassador at OBE Organic Beef, organic beef is lower in overall and saturated fat, but the benefit of eating organic goes beyond just that. The most obvious reason is to reduce harmful chemicals, growth hormones, antibiotics and suspected carcinogens – all of which are extremely hazardous to our health.



THE HEALTHIEST CUT OF MEAT IS....

Tenderloin (fillet mignon) as it is very lean.

FLAVOUR IT

'To give steak a smoky aroma and flavour, place soaked wood chips on the coal when grilling. You can also use soaked herb stems like rosemary.' *Robin Little, chef de cuisine at MJ's Steakhouse*

Getting beef-y with it

A study conducted by OBE Organic beef revealed that people who consumed beef found it to be an excellent source of protein and nutrients including iron, zinc, selenium and Vitamin C, and those who ate it regularly met their Reference Daily Intake (according to USDA standards) for protein, iron, zinc and Vitamin B as well. "Organic meat – especially from grass-fed cattle – doesn't introduce pesticides into your body, is lower in saturated fat, contains healthier omega-3 fats and has higher amounts of conjugated linoleic acid (CLA), which may help reduce your risk of developing cancer and heart disease," says Laura Smith, head nutritionist at healthy fast food eatery Kcal.



CHEMICAL REACTION

The chemical process that beef goes through during cooking is called The Maillard or browning reaction. When protein on the meat surface recombines with the sugars present in the meat, this creates a meaty flavour and changes the colour to brown. When meat is cooked, the outside reaches a higher temperature quicker than the inside, which triggers the reaction and creates the strongest flavours on the surface. This observation was first made by Louis-Camille Maillard when he was trying to figure out how amino acids linked to form protein.



SIMPLY RED

"There is no measurable blood in a properly slaughtered and butchered animal as 99 per cent of the blood is drained from the carcass immediately, when beef is slaughtered" says Wahid Kandil, General Manager of Prairie Halal Foods at Lafayette Gourmet. Robin Little adds that the juice that comes out of a steak when you cut into it is highly pigmented Myoglobin mixed with water. This is an iron and oxygen binding protein that is found in muscle fibre.

SHOP RIGHT

Make sure you're getting the best possible product with these expert tips:

1. **APPEARANCE:** The cuts should be smooth and have no shabby edges or uneven sections.
2. **TEXTURE:** Make sure it's firm to touch, not mushy or even slightly slimy.
3. **COLOUR:** Fresh meat should always be a vibrant red, never dark, blue-ish or green-ish. These are signs that meat has been sitting in the fridge for a long period and isn't fresh or in a good condition. It should also be uniform in colour and not have discoloured spots.
4. **AROMA:** It should smell fresh, no strong smell of anything else other than meat.

THE BIG DEBATE: WAGYU OR ANGUS?





Angus, a breed of cattle which originated in Scotland, is known for producing well-muscled meat with high level of marbling, whereas Wagyu, which literally means cow in Japanese, refers to several breeds of cattle that are massaged a particular way to prevent soreness and loss of appetite. Wagyu (also known as Kobe) is also predisposed to having well-marbled fat, are ultra-moist and have a very rich, buttery flavour. No one type is better than the other, and the choice depends on people's personal preferences.

Well done!

Tarek Ibrahim, Business Development Manager of Meat and Livestock Australia, MENA, says, "Always make sure your hamburgers are well done, as the meat has multiple bacteria inside and outside. Never eat hamburgers medium or rare."

Old is gold

Lij Heron, chef de cuisine at Lexington Grill, Waldorf Astoria Ras Al Khaimah says dry ageing is a traditional way of preserving meat, through which the enzymes in the meat naturally break down the protein, fats and glycogen, generating amino acids, which make the flavour more concentrated and sweet, and the meat tender. Dry ageing beef involves resting the carcass for weeks and even months, in carefully controlled conditions, making dry aged beef quite expensive.

A CLEAN SLATE

MEAT CAN LEAVE BEHIND COLOUR - ON LIGHT COLOURED BOARDS – AND SMELL TOO. FOLLOW THESE RULES FROM WAHID AND DIMA TO KEEP BOARDS AS GOOD AS NEW:



- Use separate cutting boards for cooked meat, vegetables and other foods, as bacteria can reside in grooves produced by cutting, or liquids left on the board.
- If using deeply scored wooden boards, resurface them or else they will harbour bacteria.
- Clean your meat board by sprinkling bicarbonate of soda and rubbing it with a brush. Then plunge a washing sponge into a mixture of bicarbonate of soda and water and rub all over the surface. This kills germs, mould and gets rid of aromas.

MEAT MUST-HAVES

Three essentials for a meat-lover's kitchen



- The Profi Plus meat hammer by WMP is perfect for tenderising steak. Dhs100, from Tavola.
- This Meat thermometer is a must for checking if meat has reached is cooked to perfection. Dhs79 at Lakeland.
- The Schmidt Brothers® Carbon6 8.5" Carver-Slicer knife will allow guests to carve through meats effortlessly. Dhs279 at Crate and Barrel.



Savvy shopping tip!

Always shop for non-perishable foods first and meats last. Use an insulated bag to keep meat cold, especially in hot climates, and when you need to travel for more than 30 minutes after purchasing meat.

GOING GREENER

There are many environmental benefits to eating organic and natural beef. "Farmers use less energy, water resources and no pesticides, creating a more sustainable environment for all of us as well," says Wahid. GF



Living with diabetes

Life as a diabetic can be near-normal with a few diet tweaks and a bit of lifestyle management, Nicola Monteath learns from the experts.

Diabetes is becoming a global epidemic that is increasing at an alarming rate. A 2012 study conducted by the International Diabetes Federation revealed that the prevalence of diabetes in the UAE is at 18.9 per cent, with the country being ranked 11th worldwide. Unhealthy lifestyles that are highly sedentary and poor dietary habits, with increased cosnumption of processed foods are one of the primary reasons for the global rise in the incidence of diabetes. A deficieny in Vitamin D – which is highly prevalent in people living in the UAE, as they aren't exposed to the sun – is also one of the leading risk factors.

However, diabetes doesn't have to bring normal life to a grinding halt, as long as the diet and lifestyle is managed properly. Food plays an integral role when it comes to controlling diabetes, and offers natural remedies for the condition. "What you eat directly affects your blood sugar levels. Having a well-balanced diet, rich in nutrients and controlled in calories will help diabetics remain in good health and reduce their risk of developing diabetes-associated complications such as cardio-vascular diseases and kidney problems," says Emilie Hartman, dietitian at Mediclinic Dubai Mall.

The key is to reduce the intake of processed foods and include more low-GI (glycemic index) foods to get all food components that can help maintain good blood sugar levels. Here, our expert panel consisting of Emile Hartman; Bengt Ternstron, CEO of Rashid Center for Diabetes and Research; and Dr. Jane Darakjian, Dietician and nutritionist at DFC (Doctor Fitness Centre) Academy UAE, tell us which foods a diabetic should include in their diet. If you are, or know someone who is already a diabetes statistic, pack your shopping trolley with these:





Cinnamon

This fragrant spice can be added to sweet and savoury dishes and contains components which help the body use insulin more effectively, to allow more glucose to enter cells and help reduce high blood sugar levels. Diabetics can include it in their diet to help break down sugars and fat, and help protect against cardiovascular disease as well.



Oats

The low-GI grain is rich in soluble fibres and a partial complex carbohydrate, which makes it a great option for those who are obese and snack mindlessly – as oats digest slowly in the system, gradually producing energy, helping you feel full for longer, and don't induce a spike in sugar levels right after eating. Opt for unsweetened or unflavoured varieties and don't hesitate to sprinkle a pinch of cinnamon on top.



Flaxseed

These seeds are rich in Omega 3-6-and 9-fatty acids and are good sources of fibre, magnesium and phytochemicals, including antioxidants. It is recommended to eat them in powder form, as they are easier to digest, and the real nutrients lie beneath the shell in the seed itself. Add powdered flaxseeds to smoothies, oatmeal, low-fat yoghurt, soup and salads.



Green tea

The polyphenol content in this antioxidant-rich tea may help increase insulin activity, which helps lower high blood sugar levels. It also lowers chronic inflammation – caused by high-fat foods, lack of exercise and less consumption of fruits, vegetables and good fats – and helps protect against heart attacks as it contains flavonoids.



Garlic

This kitchen staple not only promotes the efficiency of insulin but also reduces high cholesterol levels which leads to heart disease. Diabetics will benefit from eating garlic, as certain compounds it contains help lessen the effects of complications (in diabetes patients) such as high blood pressure, strokes, kidney disease and failure, and amputations and blindness. These compounds also help strengthen the immune system and regulate blood pressure.



Green leafy vegetables

Spinach is low in carbohydrates and high in fibres, which help control the portion of starch intake and keeps you fuller for longer as well. The dark leafy green vegetable is rich in antioxidants, a great source of Vitamin C and E, iron and folic acid and helps keep blood pressure in control as it is high in potassium and magnesium. Vegetables such as kale and collard greens are also good sources of lutein, a carotenoid which aids eye health in diabetics.



Nuts

Nuts are high in healthy fats (unsaturated) which help reduce insulin resistance as they are rich in fibre and magnesium and control blood sugar levels. They also protect the heart by fighting against diseases. Pine nuts, peanuts and almonds are a good source of Vitamin E which protect cells and help prevent nerve and eye damage in diabetics. It can be easy to overeat, while snacking, so make sure to treat yourself to no more than 40grams of unsalted nuts a day.



Legumes

Chickpeas, cannelloni beans, kidney beans and lentils are all are low in fat and calories, and high in fibre and protein, which help reduce the risk of cardiovascular strokes. The fibre in legumes slow down the release of glucose into the bloodstream, which regulates blood sugar and prevents a sudden rise in blood sugar levels. The iron in chickpeas helps regulate haemoglobin – absorption of nutrients to the bloodstream – and controls blood sugar levels as well.



Fruits

Strawberries and kiwis are great options for diabetics who want to increase their Vitamin C intake, as the percentage of sugar in these fruits are lower than other Vitamin-C rich fruits such as oranges, and also help regulate blood sugar levels. Fruits such as papaya, which are lowGI and rich in Vitamin A and carotenoids, and blueberries – packed with antioxidants – are good low-sugar choices too.



Fish

It's no surprise that Omega-3 rich fatty fish such as salmon, sardines, mackerel and tuna are power foods for diabetics as well. The fatty acids in these oily fish keep arteries clear and lower high cholesterol levels and triglycerides – prevalent amongst diabetics.



Dark chocolate

A study published in Diabetic Medicine, claims that good cholesterol (HDL) and overall cholesterol balance is enhanced when patients consume 45g of dark chocolate each day. Dark chocolate – the higher the cocoa content, the better – also lowers blood pressure levels and improves the functioning of blood vessels. It's a great alternative to milk and white chocolate as the breakdown of sugar is slow and so converts into energy gradually, rather than causing a sudden spike in blood sugar. GF

KEEP FIT Along with a balanced, nutritious diet, it's important to include at least 30 minutes of physical exercise to your daily routine. Also try and incorporate exercises such as yoga, pilates and tai chi, which help lower blood pressure, cholesterol, blood glucose and stress levels while lifting up the mood, as they allow more blood flow and intake of oxygen – all of which is important for diabetics.



WIN!

A **luxury trip** for two at **Grand Hyatt Singapore**, worth over **Dhs7,500**





1 lucky winner and a friend can win a dream getaway to the Grand Hyatt Singapore, inclusive of a three-night stay, breakfast, cocktails, all-day snacks and drinks, buffet dinner and a gourmet dinner.

Grand Hyatt Singapore, located in the bustling commercial and entertainment district Orchard Road, is a lavish hotel designed by a renowned Japanese design team. The hotel not only boasts an array of facilities including the Damai spa and fitness centre, swimming pool and tennis courts, but is also home to the award-winning mezza9 restaurant, which offers authentic Asian and Western cuisine. The restaurant features nine dining experiences including sushi, yakitori, Western grills and Thai and Chinese open kitchens. For a taste of local Chinese, Malay and Indian cooking – which combine to form Singaporean cuisine – StraitsKitchen offers a good selection of Halal foods presented in a contemporary 'marketplace' setting. Other outlets at the hotel include Oasis, an alfresco dining spot by the poolside; 10 Scotts, an afternoon tea and cocktail venue; and Brix, a whisky, wine and music bar.

One lucky winner can check in with a friend for a three-night stay in a luxe Grand Club Deluxe room with access to the Grand Club lounge – this includes complimentary continental breakfast, evening cocktails, plus all-day snacks and drinks. The prize package also includes buffet dinner for two at Straits Kitchen and a signature three-course set menu dinner for two at mezza9.

Log on bbcgoodfoodme.com to enter this competition and simply answer this question:

How many dining experiences are available at mezza9?

Scan this QR code to go straight to our website.

*Terms & conditions apply. Employees of CPI Media Group are not eligible to enter. Winners will be selected on random basis from correct entries. Flights are not included in this prize.

TASTE OF THE *world*

All the foodie news from around the globe.

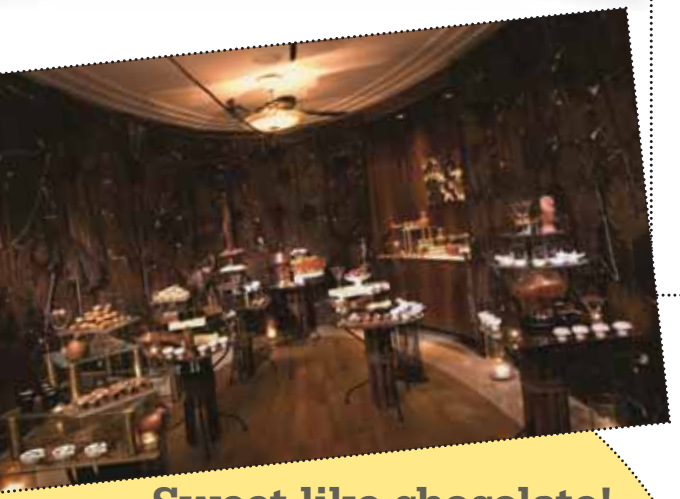


MURDER MYSTERY DINNER – RELOADED!

Adding to the exciting things going on in the London dining scene, is the trendy designer destination, South Place Hotel. Executive chef Tony Fleming, who has worked with people like Marco Pierre White in the past, has introduced a novel progressive dining concept called Dine Another Day. At this James Bond-themed experience, diners enjoy four courses at different locations around the hotel – think frog legs Kiev and aged beef sliders – while uncovering clues to discover a secret agent in their midst. Room rates start from GBP170 (around Dhs1,000), find out more from www.designhotels.com/south_place_hotel.

A weekend at the Waldorf Astoria

Now that beach weather is officially here, you don't need any other excuse to head out to Ras al Khaimah for a luxe weekend break – but if you needed one, it should be the ten dining experiences that the UAE's first Waldorf Astoria hotel is bringing to RAK shores. Offering a new level of grandeur in the region, the palatial hotel is home to 346 spacious rooms – done up in a refreshing cream and turquoise colour scheme – a beautiful beach, and an array of facilities, from golf to spa. From the picturesque social hub-style Peacock Alley lounge in the lobby, where you can indulge in canapés or cocktails, to the sleek and chic Lexington Grill restaurant, where the chef serves up some of the finest steaks this side of the Atlantic, with sides to match – you will never be too far from the iconic brand's New York roots. Other gastronomic offerings include Arabic, Japanese and Mediterranean. Take advantage of their opening offer and book in for just Dhs1,300 per night, including breakfast for two, Dhs200 hotel credit and room upgrade on arrival. Waldorfastoria.com/rasalkhaimah.



Sweet like chocolate!

Love fashion and chocolate? You'll love the latest reinvention of the Four Seasons Hotel Milano's famed Chocolate Room – a space which opens with a different theme every year. This year it's Chic-olate, inspired by Milan's stylish streets, with chocolate-y fashion sketches, chocolate bags, mannequins and hats all featuring in the room's set-up. Used as a dessert room for Sunday brunch at the hotel as well as for private events, this show-stopping room sounds worth getting on a plane for! Visit www.fourseasons.com.

Text SUDESHNA GHOSH | Photographs SUPPLIED

New on the menu

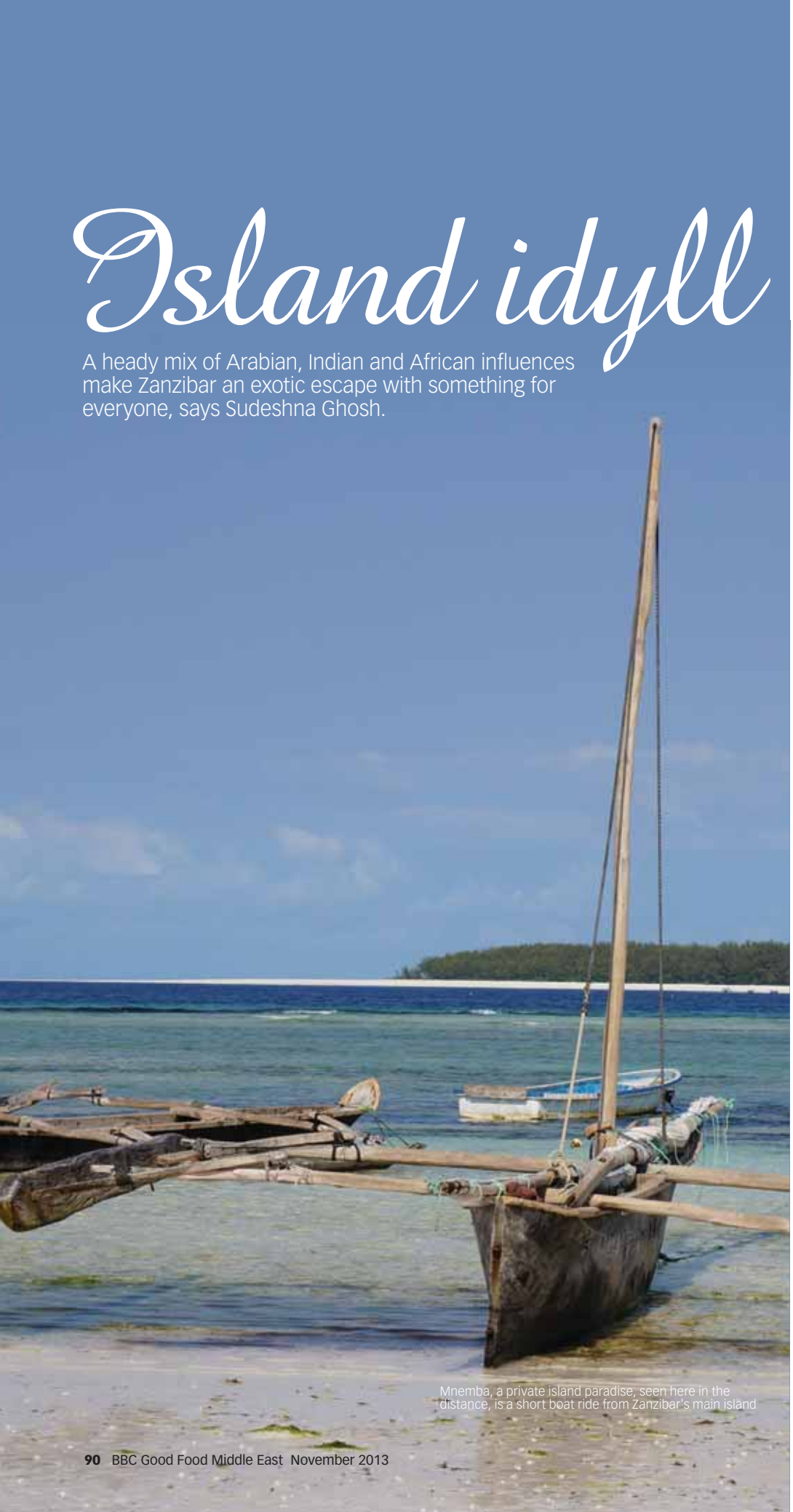
The über-stylish Chedi Muscat has just upped its gastronomic game with introduction of new menus at all the dining venues, including seasonal alfresco outlets The Long Pool Cabana and Beach Restaurant. Spearheaded by a new Director of F&B, Michiel Lugt, highlights on the new menus include Wagyu beef gyoza, and duck rillettes salad with avocado salsa, while some of the classic favourites haven't been tinkered with. Log on to www.ghmhotels.com.

BESPOKE IN THE AIR

Australian airline Qantas, which has recently introduced direct flights to Dubai and beyond to London, is starting to show airlines how it's done, by launching its innovative Select on Q-Eat programme on the route. This allows passengers in Business and Premium Economy classes to pre-order their meals before flying, and also choose what time they dine, ensuring a personalised experience. What's more, First class passengers flying out of Sydney can also enjoy a seasonally-inspired menu created by celebrity chef Neil Perry of Rockpool fame. Ticket prices start from around AUD$3,733 (around Dhs13,200) for Premium Eeconomy, visit Qantas.com.au to book.

Island idyll

A heady mix of Arabian, Indian and African influences make Zanzibar an exotic escape with something for everyone, says Sudeshna Ghosh.



Mnemba, a private island paradise, seen here in the distance, is a short boat ride from Zanzibar's main island

FOR A DOSE OF HISTORY & CULTURE

All the exoticism associated with Zanzibar can be compactly captured in capital Stone Town, a UNESCO world heritage site and the cultural heart of the island. Zanzibar has had a chequered history with numerous occupations and influences over the centuries, thanks to its coveted location on a trade route. Arab immigrants have been traced back to as far back as the seventh century, laying the foundations for the Swahili civilisation, with Oman being a strong influence through the centuries. As Zanzibar grew in importance as a trade hub – not least for, sadly, slave trade – the Omani influence crescendo-ed in the early 19th century when the ruler moved his headquarters to the island. With a growing appeal amongst western countries, Zanzibar turned into a British protectorate in 1890, and finally acquired independence to form a union with Tanzania in 1964. Since then it has remained a peaceful semi-autonomous region, still attractive to people around the world, but now for its unique appeal as a tourist destination.

Steeped in history, the numerous influences that have shaped the island are still evident in the labyrinthine alleys of Stone Town. Thus named because of the coral stone used in most of the centuries-old constructions, this historic quarter is the best place to discover the eclecticism of Zanzibar's architecture and in particular, its famed doors, overlooked by mosque minarets. The doors of Zanzibar are an attraction in their own right, each one more intricately carved and decorated than the next. Originally used as a status symbol, the doors tell a cultural story of their own, with the ones belonging to Indian homes featuring rounded tops and baroque-style engravings, while the Omani style featured rectangular shapes and Quranic carvings. To take in some more history, check out the waterfront House of Wonders, a former royal residence that has been converted into a museum; and the adjacent Old Fort, a 17th century fort now home to a cultural centre.

To truly surround yourself by history, you can't do better than to base yourself at the Zanzibar Serena Inn. There are plenty of lovely hotels dotted around this part of the island, but the Serena Inn is something of a destination in itself, with history etched into its every nook and cranny. Conveniently located in the midst of it all, two historic buildings – the old telecom building and the Chinese doctor's residence – have been carefully restored to form this atmospheric luxury hotel, a member of the Small Luxury Hotels of the World group. The colonial-style architecture transports you back in time as you enter its

Photographs: SUDESHNA GHOSH and SUPPLIED


The Serena Inn Stone Town is housed in two converted historic buildings


The hotel is set right on the waterfront


Colonial-style interiors create a cosy ambience


The Forodhani night market is a must-visit

engraved teak doors, and inside, a carefully curated selection of artefacts – from traditional Arabian samovars (copper urns used for heating water) to the black and white photos on the walls capturing the buildings in their original glory – complete the look. The rooms are cosy and inviting, with teakwood furniture and four poster beds draped with the quintessential Zanzibari mosquito net, evoking a exotic romance you always associate with the island. Generously proportioned balconies look out to the Indian Ocean, where tiny fishing boats with room for just one fisherman and his line, bob past through the day, punctuated by the odd dhow with its sails billowing in the gentle coastal breeze. Waking up to this view will be all the solace your soul needs on a holiday.

Apart from feeding your soul, your body will be more than well fed here – from the breakfast spread where you can try Swahili specialties such as ugali (maize porridge) and mandazi (a doughnut-like fried bread) as well as an array of tropical fruits, and other continental breakfast dishes, to the traditional Zanzibar curries served at the restaurant for lunch and dinner. But, whatever you do, don't miss a dinner at the signature Terrace restaurant, one of Stone Town's finest. As intimate as it gets, the alfresco restaurant comprises just a few tables lined along the terrace looking out to the moonlit ocean. A welcome with a traditional Swahili bracelet wrapped around each lady's wrist sets the tone for the fine dining experience, tempered with local warmth. The freshest seafood, which tastes like it has literally been caught a few metres away and hauled up the side of the building to make it to the table, is prepared with international flavours – think lobster bisque, sailfish tartare and tiramisu for dessert – but your best bet will be to enjoy a simple grilled seafood platter which lets the ingredients do the talking.

When it comes to fresh seafood, another must-do in Stone Town is a visit to the Forodhani Gardens night market. As the sun sets over the waterfront, local fishermen set up stalls at this open-air park across from the Old Fort, to start hustling, grilling, and frying their catches of the day. Smoke spirals its way into the sky, the fishermen proudly display the staggering variety of seafood lined up on the dozens of stalls (from octopus to eel, mackerel, prawns – you name it, and it's here), tempting aromas assault your senses… this bustling market, popular with tourists and locals alike, is any seafood lover's heaven. You pick what you want and pay for it by weight, then it is flavoured with local spices, cooked on the spot and served in paper plates with a salad – and because it's all so fresh, it doesn't usually pose any health hazards although it isn't exactly pristine cooking conditions! Even those who don't enjoy seafood will find plenty to try here, from grilled chicken skewers to Zanzibar pizza, a sort of stuffed crepe that might be comparable to a calzone.

No visit to the spice island – Zanzibar is known for the amazing array of spices grown here, which have contributed to the development of the local cuisine into the rich entity it is today – is complete without a spice farm tour, of course. You can't make a better choice than booking in for one with the community-centric Eco & Culture tours – they offer tours with a difference, with their tours culminating in a traditional Swahili lunch at a local home. A convenient morning pick-up from the Serena Inn will take you north to Kizimbani spice farm – with a stopover at the historic Persian baths en route – where you get to see, feel and smell all the spices in raw, often unrecognisable form. Whether it's cinnamon, cloves and cardamom or nutmeg, pepper and vanilla, and everything in between, the informative guide (if you're lucky, you might end up with Adam, who had taken Prince Charles on a tour on his last visit!) will offer an insight into the uses and health benefits of each. The morning ends with a visit to a local home, where you are treated to an authentic meal of spiced pulao rice, bean stew, cassava curry, and fish, and a taste of the local hospitality.

From traditional to contemporary, Stone Town offers a dazzling display of culture, both of the historic kind as well as the culinary, and should be worked into any itinerary to Zanzibar, even if it is combined with a few days of beach bliss.


A spice farm tour is a must-do in Zanzibar


You can shop for spices fresh from source at the end of the tours

NEED TO KNOW: Room rates at Zanzibar Serena Inn - Stone Town start from US$265 per night (Dhs970) including breakfast. Four-course set menu at Terrace restaurant is priced at TSH70,000 per person (around Dhs160), visit serenahotels.com. Eco & Culture Spice Farm tours cost US$30 per person, including lunch, visit ecoculture-zanzibar.org. >>



Mnemba island epitomises barefoot luxury



The bandas have no doors, offering the ultimate back-to-nature experience



Dining on fresh, local food is a highlight of the stay



Romantic beach suppers are par for course at Mnemba Island Lodge

FOR A ROMANTIC ESCAPE

The road to Mnemba island is long and arduous – a bumpy drive from Stone Town to a remote, forgotten beach populated by the occasional bus of dive tourists, and a few fishing boats, followed by a short speed boat ride to the little sand-fringed, broccoli-covered island. But when you get there, you realise this is exactly as it should be – you can't get away from it all if you don't leave civilisation behind. A small private island off the north-eastern coast of Zanzibar's main island (Unguja) set in its own atoll, Mnemba Island Lodge, run by the experts in luxury adventure experiences Andbeyond, this is the ultimate in barefoot luxury.

A symphony of doves cooing greets you as you arrive at the beach, and that birdsong becomes the soundtrack of your stay. There are just 20 bandas – the local name for the sprawling, open-plan rustic-style beach villas – on the island. There are no doors and windows in the bandas, just doorways and an oversized, blank picture frame suspended on one wall of the lounge area – the view is all the art you need. But don't let that worry you – you are truly undisturbed here, and once you've got your head around the fact that the canopy of greenery surrounding the banda offers complete privacy, it is extremely liberating. Your private butler arrives at pre-agreed times to bring you whatever you need, whether it's your morning cuppa, sundowners at the beach, or anything else that catches your fancy.

Simple whites and natural materials pervade the décor, which is designed to encourage lounging – from the multitude of stuffed cushions dotted around, and thoughtful touches like local board games and birdwatching books provided. Not that you'll need much distraction, between snorkelling in the crystal clear waters (Mnemba island enjoys restricted access to the surrounding waters which boast some of the best underwater life of Zanzibar), kayaking, swimming with the dolphins (they make a regular appearance in the area) or simply kicking back in your private beach loungers.

Or indulging in a gourmet feast. Food is a highlight of a stay at Mnemba, with the freshest produce used to create simple yet sumptuous meals. Every morning at breakfast, either the executive chef or the sous chef has a personal chat with each guest to discuss the day's meal plan. While a suggested menu is written up on a chalkboard at the common dining room area, meals can be personalised to taste, and dietary concerns are carefully managed. The young chefs, armed with experience at leading hotels around the world, do their best to put food on the table that is no more than four-six hours old, and sourced from around the region. It is a common sight to see local fishermen turning up at the resort parading in with their fresh catch in for the chefs to take their pick. And even the fruit and vegetables are as local as possible, with the farthest sourcing point probably being Arusha, a mountain town in mainland Tanzania.

But the proof, as they say, is in the pudding. Or in this case, in every single course. Simple, light and uncomplicated Mediterranean flavours with an Asian influence and a hint of Africa let the ingredients shine through, and make every meal memorable. Whether it's lunch of pan seared freshly caught tuna with rice noodles, wasabi sauce and sesame tuille at a private dining spot tucked away in the middle of a natural bower or breakfast of homemade jams, fresh fruit and made-to-order eggs, the team ensure that you have a happy belly at all times.

Each day brings a new culinary surprise, and if all the stars align during your stay, you might be lucky to catch one of their beach barbecue nights. A magical, intimate setting is created with candles and cushions, with waves gently lapping inches from your feet, where guests get an opportunity to socialise – if they want – over cocktails and canapes at first, followed by freshly barbecued fish and meats accompanied by delicious sides. It isn't unusual for the entertainment to be provided by the sous chef, who displays almost as much talent in the singing department as he does in the kitchen!

This is just one of the many unexpected delights you can come to expect at Mnemba island. When it's time to leave, as the boat pulls away from the island, and the managers and your butler wave goodbye with arms outstretched, you just know you will want to come back. With the truly warm, friendly and intuitive hospitality, that effect of having visiting long lost friends in their little slice of paradise – something a lot of luxury hotels aspire to but don't always manage – is effortlessly achieved here.

NEED TO KNOW: Prices start from US$1,550 per person per night (Dhs5,690), including all meals. Visit www.andbeyond.com.

FOR A FAMILY BREAK

If you like your beach holidays luxurious, yet have everything taken care of by trained staff who operate like a well-oiled machine, then the Melia Zanzibar is for you. A sprawling resort, spread over a 40-acre estate, beautifully landscaped with tropical gardens, the Melia is an ideal all-inclusive solution for families. Located close to the Kiwengwa beach, along a strip with other similar resorts, this is the sort of place where you check in, and feel like you've entered a gated community that you need never leave during the duration of your stay.

The spacious rooms are designed in a contemporary style, many of them overlooking the ocean, with four poster beds and local art adorning the walls offering a sense of location. A stunning infinity pool is the resort's centrepiece, and a wide range of activity options are offered, from tennis gym, and table tennis to kayaking, handicrafts sessions and Swahili lessons. Big enough to warrant its own map, the property, while located right along the coast, has its beach located a little way away. Regular buggy service is offered to the Gabi beach – although a leisurely walk along the gardens with a shy squirrel for company can be equally enjoyable. Bright orange loungers beckon on the white sandy shore, while the on-site restaurant provides exactly the sort of fodder a day at the beach demands – light bites, cocktails and delicious thin-crust pizzas from the traditional brick oven. Be sure to check tidal schedules before planning your day at the beach however, as you can only swim in the waters at certain times.

For those who need a bit more distraction then lazy days at the beach, there is a Kids club available seasonally, and even when that is not operational, children are well taken care of, with the staff happy to arrange special activities to entertain the little ones. Once you've got the kids sorted, head to the Anantara spa – a definite highlight of a stay here. A tranquil oasis, with its own infinity pool providing the perfect post-treatment chill zone, the spa offers relaxing treatments of a standard you'd expect from a leading spa brand like the Anantara. Large hotel room-sized treatment rooms, and highly skilled and therapists make the ultimate combination for a bit of holiday pampering – you will sleep like a baby after one of their signature massages!

Diverse palates are well catered for at the Melia, where executive chef Tony Leslie ensures he provides something for everyone across the six outlets. The main restaurant, Spice Market, modelled after a traditional spice market in Zanzibar, serves up an international buffet, but their Zanzibar fish curry is one of the best you'll find on the island. Theme nights are planned for the evenings, ranging from Swahili to Mediterranean and Indian, accompanied by live entertainment. But try and fit in an evening at the lovely Jetty and Aqua restaurants each. Jetty, as the name suggests, is located on an over-water platform on stilts, and offers one of the most stunning locations on the island for a relaxed drink and tapas-style bites. Aqua, a fine dining restaurant, serves an Italian-inspired à la carte menu in an elegant baroque-style environment, with floor-to-ceiling windows seamlessly melding the inside with the outdoors – perfect for holiday date night!

NEED TO KNOW: All-inclusive packages, including all meals and select beverages, start from US$211 per person per night. According to the package booked, you are given a bracelet at the time of check-in which you wear at all times to gain access to the different facilities. Minimum-stay requirements apply, and supplement charges on certain restaurants. Visit melia.com.

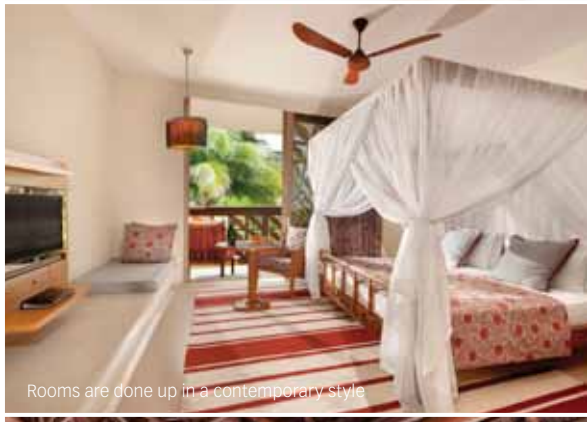
TRAVEL DIARY

GETTING THERE: Several airlines offer direct flights to Dar es salaam airport, including Emirates (tickets from Dhs2,500) from where Zanzibar is a short 20-minute flight away, or a three-hour ferry ride. Check local websites for domestic flights and ferry options.

NOTE TO TRAVELLERS: Zanzibar is a safe destination, with recent international publicity on safety issues being based on stray incidents rather than regular occurences. Nonetheless, the government has recently introduced dedicated tourism patrols to ensure safety for tourists.


The Melia hotel is set amidst landscaped gardens


You're never too far from fresh seafood in Zanzibar!


Rooms are done up in a contemporary style


Enjoy fresh wood fired oven pizzas by the beach at Gabi beach

Flavours from Thailand

The aromas, spices and fresh produce used in Thai cuisine are hard to resist, and that's exactly what chef Nut Kunlert of Lemongrass Thai restaurants showed enthusiastic Food Club members at our latest masterclass.

Members of the *BBC Good Food ME* Food Club gathered last month at Hacker Kitchen showroom to watch chef Nut Kunlert demonstrate an authentic three-course menu – which included the popular Pad Thai, a favourite with most Thai cuisine lovers – in an interactive masterclass. Members were eager to engage with the chef as they enjoyed glasses of refreshing lemongrass, and grapefruit and lychee cocktails, and nibbled on prawn crackers before the demonstration. Guests even sampled each dish as soon as it was prepared. Two lucky winners walked away with Dhs200 dining vouchers each from Lemongrass Thai restaurants as well. Take a look at these recipes from the event, which are easy to recreate at home.



BBC Good Food ME's Lauren Wing welcomes guests



Members were keen to talk to the chef to get tips



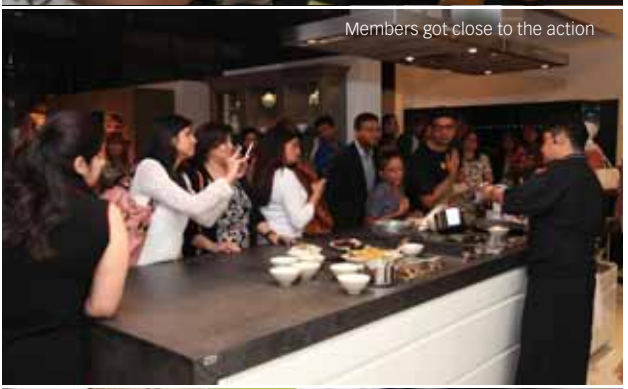
Chef Nat Kunlert enthralled guests



The various ingredients used in the dishes were beautifully displayed at the demo

PHOTOGRAPHS/ANAS CHEHUR


The delicious samplers were savoured by everyone


Members got close to the action


The refreshing mocktails were almost too pretty to drink!



One of the lucky winners of the night


Another lucky winner with her dining voucher



Laab Gai (Minced chicken salad with chilli and shredded kaffir lime leaves)

SERVES 4 ● PREP 30MINS ● COOK 15 MINS

100ml water
440g chicken, minced
20g galangal, chopped
2 tbsp fish sauce
4 tbsp fresh lemon juice
1 tsp red chilli flakes
2 tbsp roasted rice powder
20g coriander leaves, chopped
50g red onion, sliced
20g spring onions, chopped
10g fresh mint leaves
4g kaffir lime leaves, shredded
10g pak chee Laab (Thai parsley, optional)
Fresh lettuce leaves, for serving

1 Heat the water in a pan and then add the minced chicken and galangal. Cook for 4-5 mins, constantly stirring while cooking the chicken.
2 Remove from heat and add in the fish sauce, lemon juice, chilli flakes and roasted rice powder. Mix thoroughly, then add the remaining ingredients and stir for a few seconds.
3 Serve the salad on lettuce leaves, garnished with fresh mint leaves. >>



Pad Thai (Wok fried rice noodle with bean sprouts, tofu and chives)

SERVES 4 ● PREP 30MINS ● COOK 10MINS

100g rice noodles (soaked in water for 30 mins)
2 tbsp cooking oil
20g red onions, sliced
2 fresh eggs, beaten
10 small or medium sized prawns, blanched
1 tsp sweet turnip, optional
1 tbsp peanuts, crushed
30g yellow tofu (bean curd)
75g bean spouts
10g chives, diced
FOR THE SEASONING
1 tbsp ketchup
1 tbsp tamarind juice
1 tsp chilli oil
½ tbsp fresh lemon juice
¾ tbsp fish sauce
1 tbsp oyster sauce
2 tsp white sugar
Pinch of white pepper powder
FOR GARNISH
½ lemon wedge
15g bean sprouts
1 whole chive
1 tsp red chilli flakes
1 tsp peanuts
2g coriander leaves
1 lemon, cut into wedges

1 Heat the cooking oil in the wok. Add the sliced onions and sauté till golden. Then add the prawns and eggs and stir for 2 mins.
2 Drain rice noodles and place in the wok; continue to stir over high heat till the noodles are almost cooked (1-2 mins). Add all the seasoning and continue to cook until well incorporated. Add the turnip, tofu, peanuts, bean sprouts and chives. Toss for a few seconds.
3 To serve, place the noodles on a plate and add all the garnishes on top. Serve with a lemon wedge on the side.



Ruam Mit (Water chestnut rubies, palm seed, sweet corn and jack fruits in sweet coconut milk served with crushed ice)

SERVES 4 ● PREP 3HRS ● COOK 5MINS

100g small water chestnuts, diced
60ml sweet red Hale or rose syrup
100g tapioca flour
500ml coconut milk
8 tbsp white sugar
2 pinches of salt
2 pandan leaves
20g sweet corn
30g sweet jack fruit, sliced
40g sweet palm seed, sliced

1 Soak water chestnut in the sweet syrup for 2-3 hrs.
2 Mix the soaked water chestnuts with the tapioca flour. Shake well to coat.
3 Cook the coated water chestnut in boiling water for 2 mins or until it floats. Remove and put immediately in cold water. Set aside.
4 Cook the coconut milk with sugar, salt and the pandan leaf. Once the coconut milk starts to boil, remove from heat and set aside to cool down.
5 To serve put the water chestnuts, sweet corn, jack fruit and palm seed in a glass or bowl and add sweet coconut milk, topped with crushed ice. GF

Want to be a part of our next Food Club event? Then sign up for a Premium membership (details on p101) to get priority confirmation. You can also like us on **facebook.com/bbcgoodfoodme** and follow us on **twitter.com/bbcgoodfoodme** to get all our latest updates and join the foodie conversation!







WIN!

A weekend break for two at **The St. Regis Abu Dhabi**, worth over **Dhs9,500**

1 lucky winner and a friend can win a two-night stay at the luxury hotel and enjoy dining at UAE's newest Gary Rhodes restaurant, Rhodes44.

The brand new St. Regis Abu Dhabi hotel, located along the corniche, offers views of the Arabian Gulf and the Abu Dhabi Marina Mall. The elegantly-styled hotel has 283 guestrooms, including 55 suites, while some of the facilities include the Remède Spa, a swimming pool and library. It also houses six bars and lounges and two restaurants, including Villa Toscana, a cosy Italian eatery, and Rhodes44, Abu Dhabi's first restaurant by Michelin-starred celebrity chef Gary Rhodes.

One lucky winner and a friend can escape for the weekend to enjoy a luxurious stay in a Superior room (which includes the famed St Regis butler service) for two nights, and tuck into classic British and European cuisine at Rhodes44 for breakfast both mornings, as well as one evening for dinner.

Log on bbcgoodfoodme.com to enter this competition and simply answer this question:

How many restaurants does Gary Rhodes have in the UAE?

Scan this QR code to go straight to our website.

*Terms & conditions apply. Employees of CPI Media Group are not eligible to enter. Winners will be selected on random basis from correct entries.

Bon Appétit experiences with Emirates NBD

Frevo, the Brazilian restaurant at Fairmont the Palm, Dubai, was the chosen spot for the most recent Emirates NBD Bon Appétit Experiences evening hosted by *BBC Good Food Middle East*.

At our most recent Emirates NBD Experiences event at Frevo, the bank's privileged customers were treated to a masterclass in the restaurant, watching the talented chefs in action on large screen TVs placed all over, or at the demonstration station nestled in the centre of the restaurant. Chef de cuisine, Fernando Lima, showcased four traditional Brazilian dishes, which were sampled by guests after each course. Guests also tried a selection of canapés and Frevos' signature cocktail Caipirinha. At the end of the night, two lucky winners from the audience got their hands on vouchers from Fairmont the Palm, Dubai, for a dining experience for two at Seagrill on 25 degree restaurant and lounge, and a signature treatment at Willow Stream Spa respectively. Take a look at some snapshots from the event and try out some of the dishes from the delicious menu at home.


The chefs cooked up a storm



BBC Good Food ME's Lauren Wing hosted the event


Guests enjoyed following the chefs' actions


A lucky winner collects her prize from Emirates NBD team members


Adding final touches to the dishes


Guests sampling some of Frevo's specialties


The picanha skewers went down a treat


Another lucky winner of the night



Picanha skewers with mashed sweet potato, corn cream and dedo-de-moça vinaigrette

SERVES 4 ● PREP 25 MINS ● COOK 30 MINS

200g picanha steak (rump cap)
1 tsp salt
1 tsp rosemary
FOR THE MASHED SWEET POTATO
200g sweet potato
50g butter
100ml full cream milk
1 tsp salt
1 tsp chives, finely chopped
FOR THE DEOD DE MOCA VINAIGRETTE
1 onion
3 chilli peppers (dedo de moça)
100ml olive oil
Salt
100ml white vinegar
50g chives, chopped
FOR THE CORN CREAM
100g béchamel sauce, store-bought
1 can sweet corn

1 Cut the steak into 3cm cubes and season with salt and rosemary. Make skewers with 4 pieces on each. Grill to your liking.
2 Cook the potatoes and mash when still hot. Mix in the butter and add milk, salt and chives.
3 Slice the onion and cube the peppers. Mix with olive oil, salt, vinegar and chopped chives.
4 Mix half the corn with bechamel sauce, bring to a boil for about 10-12 mins on low heat. Strain and mix with the rest of the corn.
5 To serve, place the mashed sweet potatoes on one side with the vinnaigrette over it. Then place the meat skewers besides it, and the corn cream on the side.

Baby sakura mix palm heart salad with grilled passion fruit cubes and olive oil

SERVES 4 ● PREP15 MINS ● COOK10 MINS

5 boxes of baby sakura (mixed micro herbs)
200g palm hearts, grilled
200ml passion fruit juice
100ml olive oil
1 tsp salt
½ tsp pepper
100ml honey
50ml vinegar
4 unflavoured gelatin sheets
Salt, to taste

1 Chop the micro herbs and mix with the grilled palm hearts.
2 Heat the passion fruit juice, olive oil, salt, pepper, honey and vinegar. Simmer for about 10 mins, add the gelatin sheets. Remove from heat after 10 min.
3 Refrigerate until firm – approximately 12 hrs. Cut the passion fruit jelly in cubes and add to the palm heart salad. Serve.





Bolo de Rolo com brigadeiro de limão (Guava rolled cake and lime chocolate ball)

SERVES 4 ● PREP 10 MINS ● COOK 18 MINS

50g sugar
50g butter
2 eggs, yolk and whites seperated
50g flour, sifted
300g guava paste (Available at all leading supermarkets)
FOR THE LIME BRIGADEIRO
473ml condensed milk
80g butter
4 tbsp cocoa powder
30ml lemon juice
Zest of 2 limes

1 Beat sugar and butter well. Stir in the egg yolks one by one, then the egg whites. Add the sifted flour and mix gently. Flatten the dough on a silicone baking mat and place in a shallow baking dish. Preheat the oven to 160C and bake for 3 mins.
2 Melt the guava paste on low heat for 15 mins.
3 Place the dough on a thin paper or a kitchen towel sprinkled with sugar. Place melted guava paste on it and roll, with the help of a kitchen towel. Sprinkle sugar on top.
4 To make the brigadeiro, in a saucepan, add the condensed milk, butter, cocoa powder and lemon juice. Mix well and bring to low heat stirring constantly. When the brigadeiro begins to detach from the bottom of the pan, grease a plate and move the brigadeiro to let it cool for about 15 mins.
5 Roll the brigadeiro to a ball shape and grate the lime zest on top. Serve a slice of the guava roll with the brigadeiro.

The 'Bon Appétit Experience' is an extension of the 'Bon Appétit' programme that was launched in 2011 by Emirates NBD, which enables premium cardholders to enjoy exclusive discounts of up to 30 per cent at over 1,000 restaurants in the UAE, when they use their Emirates NBD Debit or Credit Card.

Bon Appétit from Emirates NBD

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Competitions

Fabulous prizes, from dining vouchers to event passes, up for grabs.

WIN! 10 PAIRS OF TICKETS TO THE LIFE AND STYLE SHOW UAE, WORTH DHS1,000.



Ten lucky winners can win free access for two each, at the largest and most happening lifestyle event of the year, Life and Style Show UAE, taking place at The Abu Dhabi National Exhibitions Centre. Winners can watch cooking demonstration from celebrity chefs such as Gary Rhodes and Khulood Atiq, and check out the event which has six different sections dedicated to Gizmos, Gadgets and Tech; Toys, Hobbies and Games; Home and Living; Fashion and Beauty; Speed and Power; and Sports and Leisure. Don't forget to stop by our stand at the Home and Living section to say hello!

WIN! THREE DAY DETOX PACKAGE FROM DETOX DELIGHT MIDDLE EAST, WORTH DHS1,200.



One lucky winner can choose from the Juice delight, Juice and soup delight or Super green delight package, and have it delivered right to their doorstep. The all-natural detox programme comprises of fresh pressed juices, smoothies, soups and vegetarian or raw food menus. Ideal for those who want to cleanse the body, while giving it a health boost.



WIN! BUFFET DINNER FOR TWO WINNERS, WORTH DHS540 EACH, AT CHEF'S HOUSE, RADISSON BLU DUBAI MEDIA CITY.

Two lucky winners can take a friend each to this popular Dubai Media City venue, for one of the theme night buffet dinners from Sunday to Wednesday. Choose from Surf and Turf on Sunday, TemptAsia on Monday, Mexican Madness on Tuesday or We love Sushi on Wednesday nights.

WIN! DINNER FOR TWO AT CHOR BAZAAR, MÖVENPICK HOTEL IBN BATTUTA GATE DUBAI, WORTH DHS500.

Chor Bazaar, which evokes Indian street culture, offers a selection of curries, tandoors and thali, to give diners a taste of Indian flavours. One lucky winner can try an Indian Thali which includes a selection of dishes, or indulge in dishes from three traditional tandoor ovens.





WIN! CHEESE AND GRAPE NIGHT FOR TWO, AT PLANTATION LOUNGE, SOFITEL DUBAI JUMEIRAH BEACH, WORTH DHS500.

Two lucky winners can get a chance to try the Premium cheese and grape night package which includes an assortment of some of the finest cheeses from France, as well as a free flow of selected beverages. Sit back, tuck in and listen to tunes from the DJ as you enjoy a refined evening.

WIN! MEAL FOR TWO, WORTH OVER DH300, AT MAZINA, THE ADDRESS DUBAI MARINA.

One winner and their partner can grab a plate and enjoy mouthwatering Mongolian food at the Mongolian theme Night on Wednesdays. Expect a selection of vegetarian and meat dishes cooked fresh at live cooking stations.



WIN! DINING VOUCHER FROM SALERO – TAPAS AND BODEGA, KEMPINSKI HOTEL MALL OF THE EMIRATES, WORTH DHS300.

One lucky winner and a partner can get a chance to visit this Spanish outlet (due to open at the end of November), and try sharing platters of tapas with a modern twist, or 'tapear' as the Spanish like to call it – which defines the action of going to a restaurant to eat tapas.



To stand a chance to win these prizes, visit our competitions page on www.bbcgoodfoodme.com, or simply scan this QR code with your mobile to go directly to the website, and answer the simple questions.

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Meet the blogger

Helping you connect to the UAE'S foodie community, one blog post at a time.

French-Lebanese national **RALPH JOUDET** moved to Dubai from Paris in 2007 along with his wife Sara for a real estate job at Majid Al Futtaim Properties LLC. The 34-year old is the founder of Cooking with Ralph, where he shares his love for baking and cooking from his home in Al Hudaiba, Dubai. A typical day in Ralph's life includes work, cooking, updating his blog with recipes he has tried, and a workout at the gym – he works out five days a week to work off all the calories he gains from tasting his own sweet treats! A man of many interests, he also likes to spend time with nature and animals, and counts fishing and collecting shells as his other hobbies.

✳About the blog



CookingwithRalph.com began in September 2010, after friends and family kept asking for my culinary advice and recipes. I started the blog so that they could access my recipes whenever they wanted. Initially it was all about baking, but I gradually made the move towards a few healthy dishes, as I felt the blog needed to reflect me more. I began a diet a year ago and have lost 25kgs in five months by only eating healthy, organic food. All these dishes are on the blog, which is in French at the moment, but can be translated via Google translate.

Cooking tips

✳ When making tabbouleh, massage salt and cinnamon on to the finely chopped onions, to reduce the strong smell and make them taste better.

✳ To give meat a smoky, barbecue flavour when baking or roasting, light a piece of charcoal, put it in a small piece of aluminium, and place in the middle of the dish. Cover for about 10 minutes and notice the difference when you eat it.

✳ To make your own buttermilk, add one tablespoon of white vinegar to 240ml of milk and set aside for 10 minutes.

Fondest food memory

A few years ago, I was in Cesena, Italy, on a business trip and was invited to a Romanian restaurant called Cã ad Pancot for lunch. I ate all kinds of grilled meat with handmade flatbread (Piadina). The portions were huge and delicious and it was the best meal I've ever eaten till now.

A foodie personality I would love to dine with...

Emeril Lagasse – I watch him every other day on TV. I like the way he cooks and his show is amazing. I would make Lacquered chicken, a baked chicken dish with teriyaki sauce, honey, orange juice, minced ginger and garlic and sesame seeds – it's a family favourite that my mother used to make.

"I'm a big fan of za'atar and eat it daily at home."

Guilty pleasure

Burgers! Wherever I go, I order them with a sunny side up egg – kind of like a Croque-Madame.

READING PLEASURE

The first cookbook I read was *Le Larousse du Chocolat* (Larousse) when I was 17 years old. I made brownies and have become famous amongst my friends and family for it since then. The book also sparked my passion for cooking and baking.

My quick-fix healthy dish

Organic quinoa, sundried tomato, fresh tomato chunks, spinach, olive oil and balsamic glaze.



Ultimate food luxuries

I can't live without organic almond butter and manuka honey. I add a little to apple slices every morning.

FIVE PANTRY STAPLES

Olive oil, za'atar, balsamic vinegar, quinoa and eggs.

Text by NICOLA MONTEATH | Photographs SUPPLIED



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